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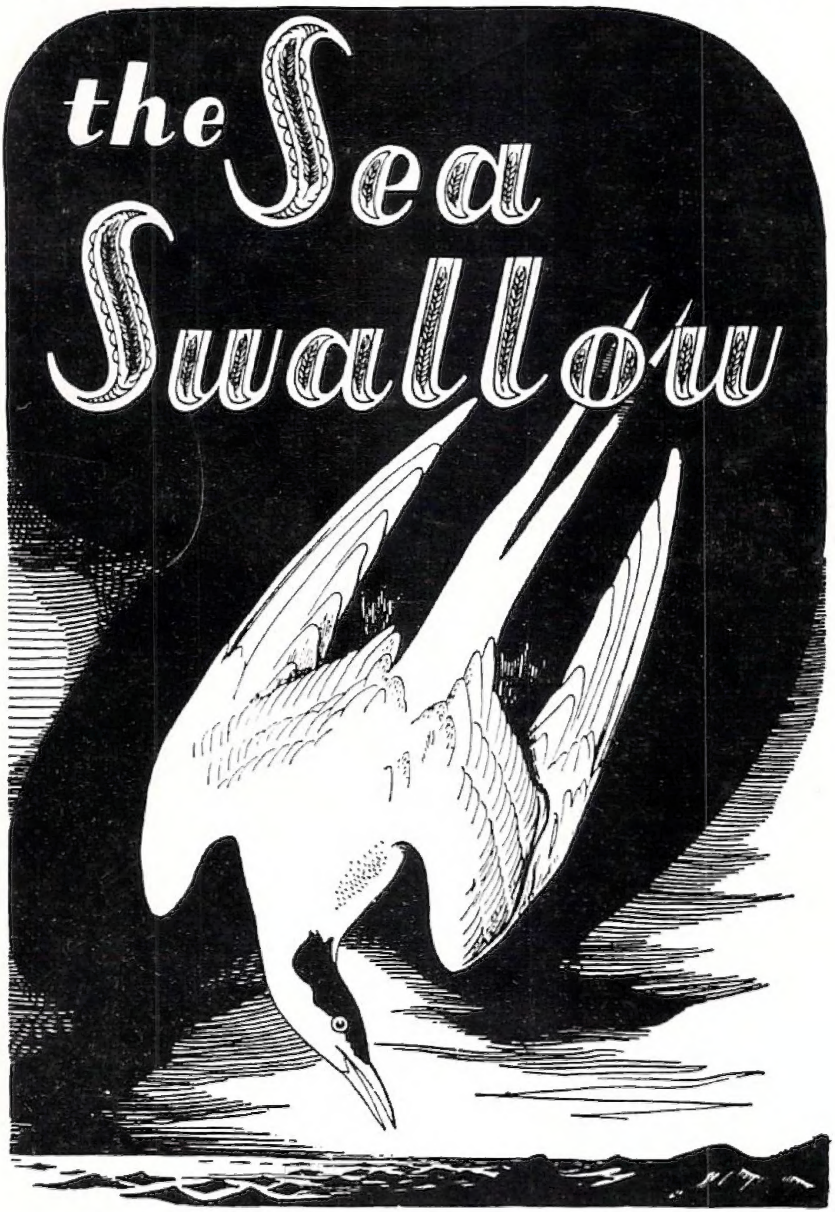

BEING THE ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE ROYAL NAVAL
BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY

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Honorary Secretary designate. Colonel P. J. S. Smith, R.M., 5 Burrows Close, Great Bookham, Surrey, KT23 3HB.

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CONTENTS

	Page
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL	*inside front cover*
FOREWORD	1
EDITORIAL	3
OBITUARY: CAPTAIN GERALD S. TUCK, D.S.O., ROYAL NAVY. 1902-1984	3
ORIENT EXPRESS	
Part I — By Lieutenant-Commander D. C. K. Roberts, R.N.	4
Part II — By Captain R. A. Smith, R.N.	6
NOTES ON SEABIRD REPORTS RECEIVED 1983	
By Stephen E. Chapman	12
LANDBIRDS FROM SHIPS AT SEA 1983	
Analysis by Commander M. B. Casement, O.B.E., M.N.I.	22
SEABIRD OBSERVATIONS FROM METEOROLOGICAL REPORTS	
By Captain Anthony S. Young, M.N.	36
OBSERVATIONS AT SOUTH GEORGIA IN 1982	
By Lieutenant-Commander M. K. Barritt, R.N.	37
REPORTS OF SEABIRDS RECEIVED IN 1973-1977. Part I.	
By Dr W. R. P. Bourne	39
AUTUMN MIGRATION OF LANDBIRDS IN BOMBAY OFFSHORE WATERS IN 1983	
By Captain D. M. Simpson, M.N.	53
OBSERVATIONS OF BIRDS IN THE SOUTH SANDWICH GROUP	
By Lieutenant-Commander M. K. Barritt, R.N.	58
MIGRANTS IN THE WESTERN ATLANTIC — SPRING 1982	
By Captain P. W. G. Chilman, M.N.	61
FLOCKS OF GANNETS WITH OTHER SEABIRDS SCAVENGING AT SHRIMP BOATS ON THE COAST OF FLORIDA	
By Bernard King	64
NEW AND UNUSUAL SEABIRD RECORDS SUMMARISED FROM RECENT LITERATURE	
By S. E. Chapman	66
SHORT NOTES	
Some Notes from the South Atlantic. Captain Colin MacGregor	69
An Unusual Hitchhiker. Captain R. Knight	71
A Hitchhiker that did not make it. Third Officer D. Bridgers	72
Migration Casualties in the Gulf of Mexico. Met. Log of S.S. *British Ranger*	72
Casualties in the Gulf of Aden. L/S. Mercer	73
BIRD BOOKS	74
USEFUL ADDRESSES	*inside back cover*

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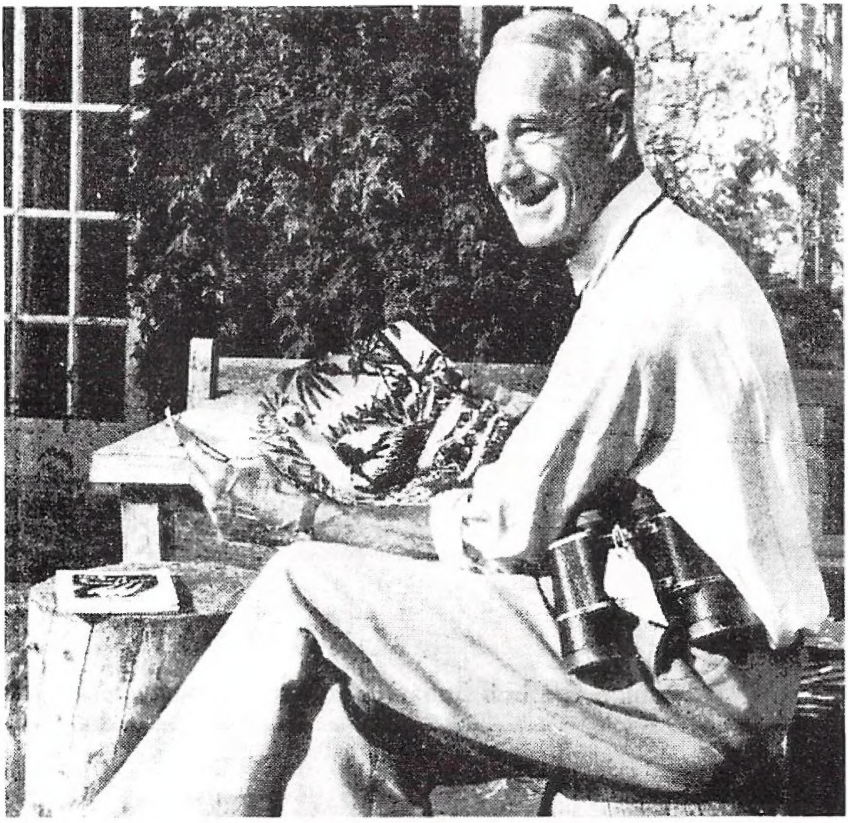
FOREWORD

Once upon a time there was a Commander-in-Chief, in whose flagship I served, who appeared unheralded on the bridge one middle watch, clad only in pyjamas and binoculars. He had heard the Officer of the watch, incautiously unaware of the open voice-pipe beside him, discussing with the Midshipman of the watch whether or not the Admiral should be shaken to report the presence of an unidentified bird, perversely drifting in and out of the glare of the for'ard steaming light as birds do in the tropics, daring the uninitiated to dismiss it as a common or garden gull when they might be rewarded with an accolade.

Sadly there are of course no longer sea-going Commanders-in-Chief, let alone ornithologically-minded ones. But I venture to hope that from time to time the Task Group and Task Unit Commanders, who today conduct the operations of our deployed forces, and whose support, both in the South Atlantic and elsewhere, we have as may be seen in these pages been enlisting, may by their interest and example achieve the same electrifying effect as did that Commander-in-Chief. He may have carried things a little further than most, pinning the bird with his stony glance within the arc of light long enough to give it not only an English but also a Latin name, having it recorded by the Midshipman of the watch, and stumping off down the ladder to his cabin, leaving his message loud and clear and all within a minute.

The pages that follow are adequate testimony to the efforts being made to improve the flow of reports from sea, and particularly from the "uttermost parts" of the sea. I do hope we can improve still further. Ours is a unique Society; and our opportunities are unique. As *Sea Swallow* goes to press, I am packing my bags, collecting my books, and otherwise preparing to visit the Falkland Islands — perhaps a unique occasion for the President of the Society? I shall be having a look at what more we might be doing, maybe in co-ordination with our fellow societies of the Army and the Royal Air Force.

It goes without saying that one of the books in my bulging briefcase will be the late Captain Gerald Tuck's "Seabirds of Britain and the World". I would wish to add nothing to what Admiral Sir Nigel Henderson has written of him elsewhere in this issue, except that there could be no more fitting memorial than the lasting value and utility of his marvellous books. We will remember him.



CAPTAIN GERALD S. TUCK, D.S.O., ROYAL NAVY
1902 - 1984

EDITORIAL

The death of Captain Gerald Tuck, my predecessor for so many years, overshadows us all, and the tributes from our President and Sir Nigel Henderson express the feelings of us all. Let it suffice for me to say that my only aim and desire is that the health of R.N.B.W.S. and *Sea Swallow* should continue to be a fitting and enduring memorial to Gerald Tuck and his work.

During the last twelve months we have received a wealth of excellent material and more than we can afford to publish in this edition. Particularly gratifying is the increased reporting from H.M. Ships of the Orient Express Task Group and from the South Atlantic. To those whose contributions have had to be deferred until next year, we apologise and hope they will understand. As the quantity and quality of reporting continues to improve we have to be increasingly selective and ruthless, but please keep the material flowing in. Let not that be an excuse for not recording and reporting what you see.

To everyone who has contributed, thank you. Good luck, and have fun.

MICHAEL CASEMENT, *Editor.*

CAPTAIN GERALD S. TUCK, D.S.O., ROYAL NAVY
1902 - 1984

It was with great sadness that we read of Gerald Tuck's death on 24 July. For many of us Gerald had, over the years, been the Royal Naval Bird Watching Society itself. He was a founder member in 1946 and was the first Vice-Chairman, but more than that he was the original vitalising influence behind the whole project and organisation. This he remained when he became Chairman some three years later until he retired from the Chair in 1980. Since then he retained an active interest as Vice-President until his final illness overtook him.

Gerald's prodigious and meticulous work in the field of ocean birds is well known among the many organisations and societies throughout the world. His two books "Seabirds of Britain and the World" and "Seabirds on the Ocean Routes" bear testimony to his immense knowledge and industry. Through his work he has brought much credit and respect to the R.N.B.W.S. which would not be held in such high esteem but for his efforts. We owe him a great debt.

He took great care over the analysis of bird reports, his editorship of *Sea Swallow*, and the mass of other things he did to foster knowledge of ocean birds and to promote the R.N.B.W.S.

One could write at length about Gerald and his character. His enthusiasm for birds and indeed his enthusiasm for life were more than infectious. From the time many of us first knew him as a young gunnery officer in the Royal Navy and as a cricketer of no mean ability, he has been a charming and constant friend. He was always full of fun, and in his own words life was always "sweet as a nut". He was also a man of considerable courage, as exemplified by his personal conduct in the carrier, H.M.S. *Illustrious* in which he was Commander, when she was heavily bombed in 1941. For this he was awarded the D.S.O.

Our sympathy goes to his widow, Rhona, who has always supported him nobly, and to his family.

The R.N.B.W.S. will not be the same without Gerald, but he has left his monument and his memory behind him in the shape of the Society for which we should be grateful.

N. S. HENDERSON.

ORIENT EXPRESS

'Orient Express' is the name of the R.N. Task Group Deployment to the Far East under the command of Rear-Admiral J. J. Black, D.S.O., M.B.E. in H.M.S. *Invincible* from September 1983 to Spring 1984. Birdwatching was co-ordinated as a recreational activity on a group basis by Captain R. A. Smith, R.N., and other members of R.N.B.W.S. Two reports from H.M. ships *Achilles* and *Invincible* are published herewith and a third covering the remaining period from H.M.S. *Rothesay* is planned for publication next year.

Part I: September-October 1983

By Lieutenant-Commander D. C. K. Roberts, R.N.

The first of the general reports about birdwatching within the Task Group covers the voyage from the U.K. to Penang.

Regrettably, neither H.M.S. *Achilles* nor H.M.S. *Andromeda*, with whom we recently shared a visit to Cochin, India, have any birdwatchers other than myself, so this first section contains only my personal reflections.

The stay in Gibraltar between 12 and 15 September 1983 should have been a memorable birdwatching event, since the autumn migration of raptors in particular should have been well underway. Alas, a heavy social programme and the stiffening effects of hockey prevented me availing myself to this opportunity. This early setback was to be overshadowed by memorable events.

The passage through the Mediterranean was not particularly exciting, as I saw very little except Turtle Doves *Streptopelia turtur* and Swallows *Hirundo rustica* which frequented us on their southward migration. Bird flocks were certainly around, as made evident by a request, presumably from Orient Express Staff Birdwatching Officer (O.E.S.B.O.), asking the identity of a flock passing over R.F.A. *Regent*. Nothing is secret on the airwaves, and I do not know whether he was successful in his quest.

Unfortunately, the northern and potentially more interesting part of the Suez Canal, was transitted at night, and virtually nothing was identified satisfactorily in the whole transit. I found the canal edges somewhat devoid of life and that which there was difficult to identify.

As we left the canal more birds became noticeable and the association with Turtle Doves and Swallows became frequent and was to last right across the Indian Ocean. The Swallows were very tired and got themselves into some odd corners. One was found dead on 18 October in an inaccessible corner of the 4.5 turret, being discovered when an access panel was removed. If it hadn't died of hunger it would certainly have died of shock!

The Red Sea yielded many terns most of which were difficult to positively identify, but eventually both species of crested-terns were confirmed at very close quarters in the vicinity of Bab-el-Mandeb, at the south end of the Red Sea. Both Brown Boobies *Sula leucogaster* and Blue-faced Boobies *Sula dactylatra* were seen, but the highlight was the visit by an elegant and very dainty Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis*.

Opening out into the Indian Ocean brought large and frequent groups of Grey Phalaropes *Phalaropus fulicarius* and several shearwaters were seen but too far distant to positively identify.

September 27 was truly a day to remember, all because of a single bird. The group was operating with the French Navy off Djibouti, with one serial requiring a heaving line transfer between ourselves and *Commandant Ducaing*. This ship appeared to have a noticeable spot of brilliant colour perched quietly on the lip of a rubber scupper just aft of the bridge screen. With the aid of Williams' "Birds of East and Central Africa" quickly grabbed from a bulging bookcase, the brilliant blue, chestnut red and pink/red colours were readily identified as a Grey-headed Kingfisher *Halcyon leucocephala* which presumably had hitched a ride from Djibouti. The colours were a sight to behold and, in spite of the high quality of reproduction of Williams' book, could not be adequately depicted in print.

The Indian Ocean was rather thin on birds, but I was surprised by the scarcity of them to the south of Sri Lanka, considering how close we were to that island and the Maldives. The same was true off the west coast of India, but this area was brought to life with the arrival of a Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* which I presume had got lost, because Salim Ali's "Indian Birds" makes no mention of this species.

Cochin afforded the readily grasped opportunity to visit Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary, on a two-day excursion finally reached after an incredible six and a half hour journey in a so called "luxury" Indian coach. The roads were steep, and in poor condition, as they wound up the spectacular hills of the western Ghats, through rubber and tea plantations. One has to marvel at the fortitude of the early plantation owners who had to overcome nature's tremendous barriers to get their produce to the coast. The Indian coach seats five abreast, and is decidedly designed to take the slimmer and smaller frame of the Indian, but even for them it cannot be very comfortable.

Salim Ali's book came into its own as we approached and reached Lake Periyar, around which is the wildlife sanctuary. The book was invaluable in identifying all five of India's kingfishers, kites, lorikeets, mynahs, bulbuls and storks seen amongst elephants, deer, wild boar, otters and monkeys. The arduous journey was undoubtedly worthwhile, not only for the sanctuary, but as an opportunity to gain an insight into the Indian way of life and was tremendous value for money at only £20 for journey, meals and hotel accommodation.

The sound of horns and fast vehicles within the sanctuary, showed that the Indians still have much to learn about running wildlife preserves. The noise was totally incompatible with ears wishing to be more finely tuned to the calls of babblers and parakeets, and emphasised even more the pleasure of hearing the dawn chorus just after six o'clock and the day's only quiet period.

My look at Indian birds was inevitably brief, and at times frustrating, but was also rewarding.

Finally, on a different note, my faith in British service was restored when a copy of Collins' "Field Guide to the Birds of South East Asia" arrived direct from that publisher. This was a case of nothing ventured, nothing gained. I had written to Collins asking for details of the impending publication date, and if it were possible to send a copy direct. This they did, but it turned out to be their only *loan* copy, which I have to return in due course, when I have bought my own in the usual manner. This was a most kind and appreciated act. Apparently publication, with printing taking place in Hong Kong, had been held up by the effects of typhoon "Ellen" which struck the colony not long ago.

ORIENT EXPRESS

Part II: October-December, 1983

By Captain R. A. Smith, R.N.

When H.M.S. *Achilles* departed, the team from H.M.S. *Invincible* took up the challenge. The members of this team were Commander Dick Smith (RAS), most of whose day as the Commander was spent in the artificial light of the 'tween decks: Charge Chief MEA R. G. Coulter (RGC) who spent much time maintaining aircraft lights, hydraulic systems and boats' engines; and Sub-Lieutenant Roger Eaton (CRE), a helicopter pilot in 820 Squadron, who when on day, as opposed to night, flying undoubtedly had the best opportunity to view birds.

Spotting birds from a modern aircraft carrier is far from straightforward. The noise and activity, sometimes 24 hours a day, of aircraft not only keeps sensible birds at a distance but also keeps the majority of the 1002 people on board restricted to below decks for much of the time. Apart from the flight deck, the fo'c'sle and the island decks (all subject to strict rules about "goofers") the only spaces left are the covered boat-bays and the quarterdeck, which afford only imited viewing opportunities when the sea state has not put them out of bounds. Remember, too, there are no scuttles! The bridge, of course, has windows — though no open wings — and is a reasonable site for the lucky few on rest days. From its height of eye of 89 feet, more time than is usual is spent looking down on birds.

The bridge watchkeepers were very good at alerting RAS of sightings, though the 5 minute dash from cabin down aft to bridge up top in the island was often all too frustrating! Because of such factors as these our sightings were spasmodic: we had no way of regularly covering the whole day or even a similar period each day. Nonetheless we all thrived on, and were thrilled by, the opportunities that did occur.

An Indian Pitta *Pitta brachyura* on board H.M.S. *Invincible*
Photo: Sub-Lt. C. R. Eaton, R.N.

BOMBAY TO SINGAPORE 14-25 October

The Task Group split up from time to time, and there are inevitable overlaps between reports from different ships. Thus, though DCKR has already commented on *Achilles'* passage from India to Malaysia there are a few observations to add.

The intensive flying programme for the first few days after sailing Bombay allowed little opportunity to see much. However, a respite off the southern tip of the sub-continent coincided with a 'shipfall' of several landbirds and insects. Despite an aircrew clay-pigeon shoot over the stern an Indian Pitta *Pitta brachyura* braved the flight deck, see photograph. This dazzling little bird with virtually no tail rested on the island guardrails for a while before resuming its 70-mile journey to land. Also seen on board was the Common Wood-shrike *Teprodornis pondicerianus*, appropriately named after the nearby Pondicherry. Two remained for over a day, feeding off a large number of dragonflies. The delightfully cheeky shrikes were totally oblivious of the noisy environment, with one daringly feeding on injured insects beneath the rotating disc of a Sea King helicopter (*Helixpterus marerex* ?). A few minutes later the same bird took a rest, perching on one of the main blades of another helicopter as it was being folded under power, a dangerous moment for bird and helicopter. However, all went well and a day later the wood-shrikes left, leaving the flight-deck to the paraffin budgies.

Major shop-windows at sea off Penang and Singapore, followed by a heavy official harbour programme, permitted little time to explore the Malacca Straits area. A flight around the island of Singapore in a R.N.Z.A.F. Iroquois helicopter (*Helixpterus iroquoi* ?) showed, however, how much the natural vegetation has been pushed back to be replaced by a concrete jungle. Perhaps more will be seen of the bird life when *Invincible* returns for a longer stay in 1984.

SINGAPORE TO FREMANTLE 29 October-7 November

The Task Group sailed from Sembawang (on the north side of Singapore Island on a sunny Saturday morning), passing between the coasts of Malaysia and Singapore; a large number of terns were sighted, but none in groups (RAS). All were heading in a southerly direction, and though never close enough to be certainly identified were possibly Common Terns *Sterno hirundo*. Lazily flapping among the terns, at about 6 feet above the water, was what looked like a Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus* scouting around the fish traps and the diminutive fishing craft. The harbour pilot, seeing our interest, said that this month and the following were the height of the migration period "for birds from China".

Once clear of the island the Group entered the eastern part of the Singapore Straits. It was a debris-laden stretch of water covered with oil-slicks. To match the sea, the weather changed too as the

large cumulus clouds gathering over Indonesia spread, darkening the sky and bringing a heavy humid atmosphere. A couple of schools of dolphins dodged the oil-slicks. Few birds were around though occasional distant terns could be seen. In the difficult light they appeared largish and were dark on top: either Sooty *Sterna fuscata* or Bridled Terns *Sterna anaethetus*. Their smooth flight suggested the latter (RAS).

Later, as *Invincible* closed Horsburgh Light, some Crested Terns *Thalasseus bergii* were seen, several resting on floating logs (RAS). At about lunch time the ships turned into the cleaner waters of the South China Sea, heading southwards. Apart from flying fish, jelly fish and a solitary garfish sprinting along the surface on its tail, little life was seen for several hours. In the dog-watches, when some 30 miles off land, about 20 terns were seen fishing near a small school of dolphins. Others were sitting on logs. They kept their distance from the noisy gas turbines of *Invincible* and could only be identified as black on top and white below: again, either Sooty or Bridled Terns. Just before sunset a martin flitted around the flight deck, the first seen since the Red Sea when so many passed the ship.

Dawn the next day saw the Task Group in line of column passing through the Banka Strait. One frigate-bird was effortlessly gliding about 120 feet high a mile away near Sumatra. Two raptors passed high over the strait too far off to recognise, but were perhaps, Ospreys *Pandion haliaetus*. At last, one tern came close enough to be certainly identified — a Crested Tern *Thalasseus bergii* with yellowish bill and the receding black forehead of a non-breeding adult (RAS). The day was then interrupted by the arrival of King Neptune and his court!

Overnight the Group passed through the Sundra Strait to emerge by daylight into open waters. Free of the constraints of territorial limits, flying resumed its usual intensive pace in conjunction with exercises with R.A.N. and U.S.N. forces. However, this got CRE airborne and early on he saw a Great Frigate-bird *Fregata minor* but kept well clear to avoid the risk of a bird-strike. A greater area can be seen from the air than from the ship, but fast observation of outstanding features of birds is required as they dive rapidly away from large noisy helicopters. CRE also saw some species of shearwater and petrel but was unable to be positive about any of them. The rest of us had to wait some time before seeing our first albatross. However, a White-tailed Tropic-bird *Phaethon lepturus* was seen from the ship (RAS), but there was no sign of the local sub-species from nearby Christmas Island.

Arrival at Fremantle led to another busy harbour programme, though a slightly longer time alongside allowed some opportunity for CRE to get into the outback. There he saw an Emu *Dromaius novaehollandicus* and photographed the Laughing Jackass or Kookaburra *Dacelo gigas*. Around the city of Perth were several

lakes with Black Swans *Cygnus atratus* on them. An initial glimpse of a receding green bird (CRE) later turned out to be the Regent Parrot *Polytelus anthopeplus*. Nearer the ship, at the mouth of the River Swan, were plenty of Australian Pelicans *Pelecanus conspicillatus*, Silver Gulls *Larus novaehollandiae* and the striking Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax varius*.

FREMANTLE TO NEW ZEALAND 14-30 November

The weather was dismal on sailing from Fremantle, but at least the rain kept the anti-nuclear demonstrators away. R.A.N. ships joined us and, later, H.M.N.Z.S. *Canterbury* arrived. It was, at first, a busy period coping with rough weather, exercises and the R.A.A.F. Also, a signal was received from H.M.S. *Rothesay* volunteering her Weapon Engineering Officer, Lt.-Cdr. Peter Jackson (PTJ), to become the new Group birdwatching officer on RAS's departure. PTJ's observations are included from this point of the report.

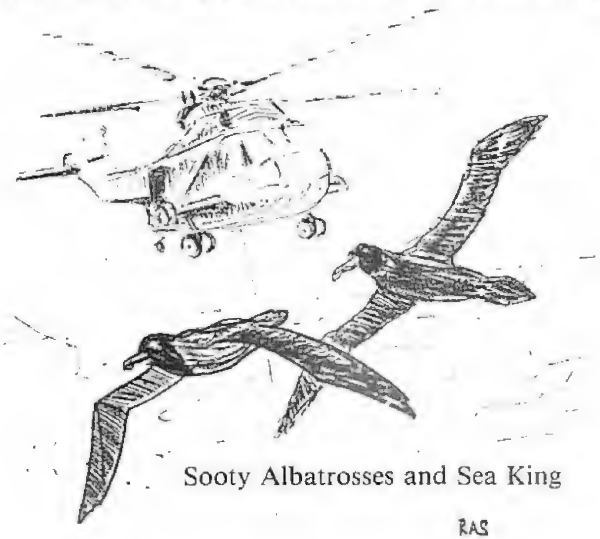
On rounding Cape Leeuwin the first albatrosses to maintain a constant presence appeared. Mostly they followed astern but occasionally kept station at bridge level only feet away from the watchkeepers. During the Remembrance Sunday service one floated effortlessly over the assembled Ship's Company and remained there undeterred by the loud bangs of the saluting guns. Crossing the Great Australian Bight was a stormy period, ideal for these birds of the Roaring Forties. It was less suitable for helicopters and they managed a magnificent effort to successfully locate a yacht adrift in the gales. The weather moderated on passing Tasmania and allowed greater access to the weather decks. Albatrosses were frequent: the Black-browed *Diomedea melanophris*, the Wandering *D. exulans*, and the Sooty *Phoebetria fusca* were the most common. Less frequent were the Royal Albatross *D. epomophora* and the Light-mantled Sooty Albatross *P. palpebrata*. Those large fulmars, the Northern Giant-petrel *Macronectes halli* (PTJ only) and the Southern Giant-petrel *M. giganteus* were also present. Plenty of petrels and shearwaters were around as well: the White-chinned Petrel *Procellaria aequinoctialis* , the Short-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus tenuirostris*, and the Grey-backed Shearwater *P. creatopus* were seen from time to time. Surprisingly few Cape Pigeons *Daption capense* were seen until off Wellington, when these lovely birds were constantly in attendance.

The ships' separate arrivals in New Zealand were met by flotillas of small boats carrying anti-nuclear protestors. Attention was more towards them than towards birds, though several Southern Black-backed Gulls *Larus dominicanus* were unmistakable. Sadly *Invincible*'s stay in New Zealand was shortened, though there was time to take some relaxing dips in the thermal pools as well as spotting ashore the introduced species of Californian Quail *Lophortyx californicus* and two magpies, the

White-backed *Gymnorhina hypoleuca* and the Black-backed *G. tibicen*. Native birds seen included the Pied Stilt *Himantopus lecocephalus*, the Swamphen or Pukeko *Porphyrio melanotus*, both the Black *Haematopus unicolor* and the Pied Kingfisher *H. ostralegus*, the scarce White-faced Heron *Ardea novaehollandiae*, the New Zealand Kingfisher *Halcyon sanctus*, and the New Zealand Harrier *Circus approximans*. Seabirds reported included Caspian *Hydroprogne caspia* and White-fronted Terns *Sterna striata*. Apart from the Southern Black-backed Gulls spotted on arrival, there were also Red-billed (the New Zealand form of *Larus novaehollandiae*) and Black-billed Gulls *L. bulleri*. The Australian Gannet *Sula serrator* was also present.

RETURN TO AUSTRALIA 5-8 December

Invincible's dash to Sydney was too fast and too busy disembarking aircraft to really enjoy the teeming birdlife to be found in the waters off southeast Australia. Once in harbour, having passed further protestors, the usual intensive programme commenced. However, having just turned over to his relief, RAS was free on the one afternoon available before the flight to U.K. to wander through the Royal Botanical Gardens. The azaleas had long lost their bloom, but many birds strange to European eyes were readily to be seen. They included the Kookaburra, what looked like the Rainbow Lory *Trichoglossus haematorius rosenbergii* several of which were whirling overhead among the tree tops (or were they Musk or Little Lorikeets?), some Sulphur-crested Cockatoos *Cacatua galeriba*, many Willie Wagtails *Rhipidura leucophrys*, a few ibis skulking in the undergrowth, plenty of Common Mynah *Acridotheres tristis*, and the very familiar Moorhen. It was a fitting finish to the birdwatching fun of the first half of Orient Express.



Sooty Albatrosses and Sea King

RAS

NOTES ON SEABIRD REPORTS RECEIVED 1983

By Stephen E. Chapman

We are grateful this year to at least 20 observers who have been active with binoculars and note-books and taken the trouble to sit down and fill out details of the birds they have identified. These, as usual, provide the backbone of our report of seabirds from the oceans of the world and again follows the established format. In the limited space available this would appear to be the best way of summarising observations, and assuming it continues to meet people's needs and satisfies the observers themselves, it is the intention to continue in this manner.

As a rough indication of the geographic scope of reports received in the calendar year 1983, about 40% of reports are from the North Atlantic, 20% from the South Atlantic with 18% equally from the Pacific and Indian Oceans and the remaining 4% from other areas.

It is a pleasure to welcome two new R.N.B.W.S. members to the ranks of reporting observers. These are Leading Seaman R. Dodd from H.M.S. *Exeter* with details of a voyage from Ascension to the Falklands, and Second Officer R. J. Tucker on M.V. *ACT 7* on a passage from Panama to New Zealand, returning to Tilbury the way of the square riggers, around Cape Horn. The highlights of 1983 reports include long and detailed reports from Captain P. W. G. Chilman of multiple voyages on the oil tanker routes to and from the Gulf or Richards Bay to Europe in 1981 and for a change, two trans-Atlantic crossings in 1982; observations by Lieutenant-Commander M. K. Barritt around South Georgia and the South Sandwich Group, reported in detail on pages 37 and 58; and Captain D. M. Simpson's report from the Bombay offshore oil fields.

Report forms considered in this summary were received from the following observers, who are thereafter identified by their initials:

Surgeon-Lieutenant D. Astley—H.M.S. *Hecate*. Hydrographic survey in eastern N. Atlantic. Apr-May 1983 (Multiple observations submitted on Nature Conservancy Council Seabirds at Sea record sheets).

Lieutenant-Commander M. K. Barritt—H.M.S. *Hecate*. Talcahuano-Panama. January 1983 (2 page census report and N.C.C. Seabirds at Sea record sheets).

Captain P. W. G. Chilman—S.S. *Limopsis*. Rotterdam-Singapore. December 1980-February 1981 (4 page census report); Singapore, Mena, Rotterdam. March-April 1981 (6 page census report). M.V. *Tricula*. Richards Bay-Rotterdam. August-October 1981 (10 page census report); Antwerp, Richards Bay, Rotterdam. February-March 1982 (5 page census report); Antwerp, Paulina, La, Rotterdam, Hampton Roads. April-July 1982 (7 page census report).

Second Officer P. C. Dyer—M.V. *London Service*. Great Yarmouth, Dakar, Valencia. December 1982 (6 page report and sketches). M.V. *Venture Service*. North Sea Viking Field. September 1983 (1 page report).

Radio Officer M. G. Finn—M.V. *Graigwen*. Portland (Oregon), Singapore, PG and return to Singapore. August-October 1982 (5 page report). M.V. *Graiglas*. Cadiz, Monrovia, Rotterdam, Norfolk Va, Dunkirk, Tenerife, Paranagua and return. April-August 1983 (6 page report).

Chief Officer R. H. Johnston—M.V. *United Drive*. Balboa-Vancouver. August 1982 (2 page census report); Hsinkang-Panama. October 1982 (4 page census report). M.V. *Aeneas*. Balboa, Manzanillo, Los Angeles, Ulsan (S. Korea). May-July 1983 (6 page census report).

Third Officer A. R. Louch—R.R.S. *Discovery*. Falmouth-Lisbon. January February 1983 (3 page census report). R.R.S. *Challenger*. Porcupine Bank. Falmouth, Rockall, Oban. April-May 1983 (7 page census report).

C.P.O. D. S. Preston—H.M.N.Z.S. *Otago*. Auckland, Tasman Sea, Wellington. March 1983 (3 page report).

Captain K. Salwegter—M.V. *Amstelvoorn*. Colombo, Fremantle, Bandar Abbas, Muscat, Singapore, Gladstone, Bandar Abbas. February-June 1983 (6 page report).

Captain D. M. Simpson—M.V. *Malaviya One*. Bombay offshore oilfields. September-November 1983 (2 page report).

Second Officer R. J. Tucker—M.V. *ACT 7*. Panama, New Zealand, Cape Horn, U.K. September-October 1983 (4 page census report).

Captain J. W. Waldie—M.V. *British Viscount*. Off the north coast of Java. September-November 1983 (3 page report and map).

Second Officer M. G. Weir—M. V. *Fort Norman*. Tenerife, Rio de la Plata, Canary Islands. September-October 1981 (3 page report). M.V. *Fort Providence*. Kaohsiung, Port Kembla, Cape Town, Europe. November 1982-January 1983 (7 page report).

Radio Officer W. Weitkowitz—M.V. *Mandan*. Hamburg, Piraeus, Alexandria, Augusta. March-April 1983 (5 page report). M.V. *Neptune Marlin*. Felixstowe, Marseilles, Suez, Colombo, Bombay and return. July-October 1983 (11 page report); Rotterdam, Livorno, Suez, Colombo, Karachi, Bombay and return to U.K. October-December 1983 (10 page report).

Captain J. W. Welch—M.V. *Moreton Bay*. Panama-Auckland. December 1982-January 1982 (2 page report).

Captain R. L. Westwater—M.V. *Bayano*. Gulfport-Cortes and return. April 1983 and two similar voyages in July and September 1983 (4 page report in total).

Captain R. W. Will—M.V. *Kawkabi*. Two return voyages Jeddah to Paranagua/Montevideo. April-August 1983 (5 page report).

The following observers submitted data from the South Atlantic and/or Falklands area which although acknowledged and recorded here, will be the subject of a separate future analysis.

Lieutenant-Commander M. K. Barritt—H.M.S. *Hecate*.

Radio Officer W. F. Curtis—M.V. *Norland*.

Unnamed observer—H.M.S. *Active*.

Leading Seaman R. Dodd—H.M.S. *Exeter*.

Lieutenant-Commander M. S. Williams—H.M.S. *Broadsword*.

NOTES ON SPECIES

PENGUINS *SPHENISCIDAE*

Jackass Penguin *Spheniscus demersus*

Total 109 in one hour watch at 34°57'S 19°38'E at interface of Benguela and Agulhas currents (temperature differential 9°C) on 26 Feb 82 (PWGC).

ALBATROSSES *DIOMEDEIDAE*

Wandering Albatross *Diomedea exulans*

One at 23°20'S 8°28'E on 20 Aug 81 and three the next day at 18°52'S 5°02'E and three again the following day at 14°10'S 1°08'E — the last birds seen, following the tanker's wake, for four days through the frequently birdless tropical Atlantic (PWGC).

Waved Albatross *Diomedea irrorata*

One at 2°52′S 88°12′W on 25 Dec 82 (JWWe) and one at 5°10′S 81°34′W on 20 Jan 83 (MKB).

Laysan Albatross *Diomedea immutabilis*

Frequently seen in company with the Black-footed Albatross *D. nigripes* but, as RHJ's detailed notes indicate, with less regularity and less in the extreme eastern part of the Pacific. Of particular note was a group on water and in flight totalling 250 at 52°48′N 170°48′E on 9 Oct 82.

Shy Albatross *Diomedea cauta*

A single bird at 34°46′S 21°36′E on 26 Feb 82 (PWGC). On the return passage the same observer saw 13 at 34°27′S 24°03′E on 4 Mar 82.

Yellow-nosed Albatross *Diomedea chlororhynchos*

Off the Cape PWGC recorded multiple observations of single birds in Oct 81 including one at Richards Bay anchorage. Off Rottnest Island, Fremantle, KS saw one on 20 Feb 83.

FULMARS, PRIONS, PETRELS, SHEARWATERS *PROCELLARIIDAE*

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Crossing the North Atlantic PWGC unexpectedly sighted at least thirteen in the warm waters (22°C) of the Gulf Stream northeast of Bermuda at 37°51'N 59°40'W on 8 May 82.

Great-winged Petrel *Pterodroma macroptera*

One at 21°49′S 6°38′E on 8 Jan 81 (PWGC). On subsequent passages around the Cape PWGC first sighted this southern ocean Petrel in the tropics/subtropics at 24°34′S 10°15′E (two birds) on 1 Oct 81 and 29°10′S 13°46′E (four) on 24 Feb 82. Leaving the tropics, last sightings were noted at 17°50′S 4°10′E (three) on 19 Oct and at 26°53′S 11°20′E (one) on 7 Mar 82.

Atlantic Petrel *Pterodroma incerta*

In the South Atlantic RJT recorded one 30 miles north of the Falklands on 30 Sep 83, nine at 42°43′S 50°10′W on 1 Oct 83, and nine again at 35°50′S 44°49′W next day.

Soft-plumaged Petrel *Pterodroma mollis*

Five at 18°52′S 5°02′E on 21 Aug 81 (PWGC).

Bulwer's Petrel *Bulweria bulwerii*

One at 26°30′S 10°45′E on 14 Apr 81 (PWGC). In the Indian Ocean WW recorded several at 10°55′N 56°20′E on 16 Sep 83 and

a single bird at 13°56'N 51°00'E on 28 Nov 83. In the North Atlantic during May 83 odd birds at 34°N 17°W and 32°N 18°W, described by DA on H.M.S. *Hecate* only as "black petrel with grey wing markings, swooping low" and "small medium brown/black petrels", were most probably of this species.

Streaked Shearwater *Calonectris leucomelas*

This year recorded only by MGF who saw hundreds ten miles south of Hokkaido on 26 Aug 82.

Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea*

At least 400 at 33°12'S 16°42'E on 12 Jan 81. These birds were mainly on the sea, many being in moult (PWGC). Subsequently, off the coast of southern Africa PWGC also saw lesser numbers detailed as follows:

Number Counted	*Duration of Watch (mins)*	*Position*	*Date*
25	95	35°18'S 21°11'E	13 Jan 81
9	100	34°20'S 26°08'E	14 Jan 81
5	100	32°22'S 29°23'E	15 Jan 81
4	100	29°14'S 35$11'E	17 Jan 81
9	95	35°00'S 23°28'E	11 Apr 81
159	75	32°06'S 15°25'E	13 Apr 81
87	110	26°30'S 10°45'E	14 Apr 81
7	95	32°55'S 16°57'E	25 Feb 82
4	60	34°57'S 19°38'E	26 Feb 82
3	105	32°27'S 24°03'E	4 Mar 82

These observations clearly confirm and extend eastwards the wintering area in the African sector of the Southern Ocean first noted by W. R. P. Bourne in *Sea Swallow* 14: 14 and again recently by A. M. Griffiths and J. C. Sinclair in *Cormorant* 10: 35-44, and support the view that this shearwater is common in southern African waters during the Austral summer.

Pink-footed Shearwater *Puffinus creatopus*

In the offshore waters of the eastern Pacific RHJ counted up to ten per hour in daily watches from 21°37'N 109°37'W on 24 Aug 82 to 41°56'N 124°45'W on 28 Aug.

Pale-footed Shearwater *Puffinus carneipes*

On a northerly Pacific crossing in Oct 82 RHJ recorded 10-100 per hour from 47°N 146°E to 53°N 173°W and then lesser numbers to 42°N 158°W. Crossing from Los Angeles to Ulsan, RHJ saw up to twenty per hour from 43°17'N 160°18'E on 1 Jul 83 to 42°05'N 144°13'E on 3 Jul 83. In the Indian Ocean KS saw hundreds at 27°57'S 111°39'E on 19 Feb 83.

Grey-backed Shearwater *Puffinus bulleri*

Off their North Island, New Zealand breeding area DSP noted hundreds off C. Brett in Feb 83 and twenty at 38°43'S 172°26'E on 18 Mar 83. In the northern hemisphere RHJ saw single birds at 41°24'N 163°05'W and at 42°13'N 179°30'E in Mar 83.

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

A long straggling flock of c. 3,000 with Cape Gannets at 34°43'S 22°11'E on 17 Aug 81 (PWGC). During a one-hour watch, in which time vessel passed from a brown-coloured sea (temperature 14°C) to clear blue water (23°C), PWGC recorded several thousands. Seals and a whale were also sighted, position 34°57'S 19°38'E on 26 Feb 82. Passing through the same area on 5 Mar there were far fewer birds and no mention is made of the interface between the cool and warm water masses. In the northern hemisphere RHJ noted a total of 3-4,000 during morning and afternoon watches at 42°N 154°E on 2 Jul 83.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

In mid-Atlantic PWGC saw two at 44°N 38°W on 5 Jul 82. To the east, ARL on R.R.S. *Discovery* noted small numbers daily in area from approximately 50°N 12°30'W to 51°30'N 13°30'W (about 100 miles southwest of the Fastnet Rock) during the month of April 1983. At the same time H.M.S. *Hecate* was SW of this general area when DA recorded similar numbers, for example four at 48°30'N 18°W on 30 Apr. On 19 May DA recorded four at 47°20'N 17°35'W. In the Mediterranean, WW recorded the race *P. P. p. yelkouan* at the following locations in Mar 83: 36°50'N 23°38'E, Mamara Sea, off Pireaus, and in the Dardanelles..

Audubon's Shearwater *Puffinus lherminieri*

Small black and white shearwaters seen in the Gulf of Mexico in July 83 (RLW) were probably this species. Unfortunately, a photograph of five in flight at 26°13'N 87°36'W on 1 Sep 83 by RLW was not quite good enough to reproduce here.

Persian Shearwater *Puffinus lherminieri persicus*

Near the Subair Islands WW noted several on 13 Aug 83 and many in small groups in the western part of the Aden Gulf at Bab el Mandeb on 29 Nov 83. A small dark shearwater described by DMS at 23°23'N 68°06'E on 7 Nov 83 was probably also this species.

STORM-PETRELS *HYDROBATIDAE*

Wilson's Storm-petrel *Oceanites oceanicus*

On crossing the North Atlantic westwards after three consecutive birdless days PWGC recorded five astern at 36°45'N 72°21'W on 24 Jun 82, and on the return passage at least twenty at 37°10'N 72°48'W on 30 Jun. In north and central Biscay small groups were

seen temporarily following in the wake on 27 Jul 83 (WW). During six weeks off the north coast of Java JWWa noted a group of thirty on 31 Oct and fifteen on 4 Nov 82. In the Indian Ocean WW made the following useful detailed observations. Several 24 miles south of Aden on 14 Aug 83; small groups following across the northwest Indian Ocean in Aug and Sep 83; a small group at 13°19′N 73°42′E on 5 Nov 83; and a few at Colombo anchorage 1, 2 Nov 83. At the Bombay High oilfield (19°37′N 71°23′E) 70 miles offshore DMS described this petrel as the most common and widespread offshore species in the month of September (1983), usually in flocks of up to 100 birds. Each manned oil-rig and platform has its attendant flock, usually milling about the downstream side of the rig waiting for galley waste to be thrown overboard.

White-faced Storm-petrel *Pelagodroma marina*

Two at 10°11′N 60°19′E on 17 Aug 83 (WW).

White-bellied Storm-Petrel/Black-bellied Storm-petrel *Fregetta grallaria/Fregetta tropica*

Two at 32°20′S 48°30′W on 16 Oct 81 were recorded by MGW as uncertain and could have been either of these sibling species. Two birds 12′ east of Cape Guardafui on 15 Aug were viewed by WW as *F. grallaria* on the basis that "one bird showed a clear white belly without a dark stripe or even streaks"

Madeiran Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma castro*

RHJ had a storm-petrel on board his ship 27°N 133°W on 19 Oct 82, the description of which would seem to fit this species — sooty black with broad white band across unforked tail, short black legs. A few measurements (wing, tail, bill, etc.) would have been helpful.

Leach's Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

Ten per hour in the tropical Atlantic at 3°N 14°W on 15 Mar 82 (PWGC). In the Pacific RHJ recorded this petrel at 21°37′N 109°37′W (two birds) on 24 Aug 82, at 42°59′N 154°03′E (ten) on 2 Jul, and at 42°05′N 144°13′E (forty) on 3 Jul 83.

Markham's Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma markhami*

During a northbound passage off the west coast of South America MKB reported two at 15°28′S 79°32′W on 19 Jan 83, two at 11°25′S 43′W on 19 Jan, approximately fifty in the wake and eight in a half-hour watch at 5°21′S 81°33′W on 20 Jan and 25 following at 1°06′S 81°23′W on 21 Jan.

Black Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma melania*

Observations from RHJ confirm the distribution of this large-sized storm-petrel in the eastern Pacific: six at 21°37′N 109°37′W on 24 Aug 82, and similar numbers between 7°05′N 81°02′W on 1

May and 17°14′W 102°46′W on 6 May 83. At Manzanillo Harbour on 7 May thirty to forty were feeding at the ship's barbecue, adroitly taking titbits thrown overboard. In feeding, birds were seen to submerge completely one to two feet. RHJ also comments that this petrel was a frequent ship follower "always working in and across the ship's wake, often close to the ship".

Ashy Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma homochroa*

Four at Manzanillo Harbour on 7 May 83 feeding near to the ship, although not as close as the Black Storm-petrels. The size difference between these two species was obvious but both had forked tails (RHJ).

Hornby's Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma hornbyi*

This Humboldt Current endemic species was reported by MKB as follows: four at 15°10′S 79°38′W on 18 Jan 83, seven at 11°25′S 80°43′W on 19 Jan and a total of 34 in a half-hour watch at 5°21′S 81°33′W the next day.

Fork-tailed Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma furcata*

Twenty-five (six per hour) at 42°36′N 150°52′E on 2 Jul 83 (RHJ) and twelve (six per hour) at 42°12′N 147°22′E next day. See also counts by S. J. Hingston in 1978/79, *Sea Swallow* 30: 58.

GANNETS AND BOOBIES *SULIDAE*

Gannet *Sula bassana*

Again this year on the route to the Cape regular observers have reported gannets including adults outside the breeding season into the tropics. A summary of these observations follows:

Number	*Position*	*Date*	*Observer*
5 I	22°25′N 17°25′W	29 Oct 81	PWGC
10 I and A	24°00′N 16°00′W	10 Dec 82	PCD
2 A, 1 I	19°40′N 17°20′W	12 Dec 82	PCD
2 I	12°50′N 17°34′W	14 Feb 82	PWGC
21 I	24°20′N 17°09′W	20 Mar 82	PWGC
1 A	23°00′N 16°54′W	22 Apr 83	MGF

A = adult, I = immature

Elsewhere, WW submitted the following observations, one immature at Alexandria outer anchorage on 31 Mar 83, in the Gibraltar Strait and Gulf of Cadiz on 29 Sep 83. The same observer saw several small groups and a single adult in the Gulf of Genoa on 9 Nov 83.

Cape Gannet *Sula capensis*

A flock of at least 500, including some immatures, with Sooty Shearwaters (*q.v.*) at 34°43′S 22°11′E on 17 Aug 81 (PWGC). Approx. 600 at 34°57′S 19°38′E on 26 Feb 82 (PWGC).

Masked Booby *Sula dactylatra*

Total 5,000 estimated on island and offshore rocks when passing eastern side of Malpelo Island (4°43′N 82°03′W) on 22 Jan 83 (MKB).

Red-footed Booby *Sula sula*

After several birdless days through the tropical Atlantic MGF sighted a single immature at 1°30′S 30°48′W on 7 Aug 83. KS recorded hundreds at 12°22′S 96°44′E on 15 Feb 83.

PHALAROPES *PHALAROPODIDAE*

Red-necked Phalarope/Grey Phalarope
Phalaropus lobatus/Phalaropus fulicarius

Due to the difficulty of positively identifying these small birds from ships, especially during the non-breeding season when they are most likely to occur at sea in large numbers, these two phalaropes are treated together. The observers' view of specific identification if provided is indicated in parathenses. Two (*P. fulicarius*) at 11°25′S 80°43′W on 19 Jan 83 (MKB); small flocks disturbed from the sea and others totalling 140 (*P. fulicarius*) in half-hour watch at 5°21′S 81°33′W on 20 Jan 83 (MKB); in the North Atlantic PWGC saw 29 (*P. fulicarius*) at 24°31′N 16°36′W on 20 Sep 81; and 20 off Cabo da Roca, Portugal, WW saw several small groups (*P. fulicarius*) on 11 Oct 83. East of Suez PWGC saw twenty (*P. lobatus*) at 23°52′N 59°23′E when the ship was stopped on 27 Mar 81. In the Gulf of Aden WW noted small groups in Sep and Oct 83 and many in the western part of the Aden Gulf and at Bab el Mandeb on 29 Nov 83 (all *P. lobatus*).

SKUAS *STERCORARIIDAE*

Great Skua *Catharacta skua*

Reported in small numbers from a wide range of localities by many observers but too numerous to detail in this summary.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

This skua and the Great Skua in its various forms vie with each other in the role of the species most frequently recorded at sea, presumably reflecting their very widespread distribution, their being attracted to passing ships, and their conspicuousness. Very selectively the following comments are highlights of many observations. During May 83 RHJ saw twos and threes off the Central American coast and a total of 25 at 7°N 81°W on 1 May. In the same month ARL was seeing odd birds in the Western Approaches. Very good notes and sketches by MGW enabled positive identification of two seabirds 300′ENE of the Bahamas on 6 Dec 81 as this species. PCD also provided sketches of this skua. Elsewhere in the

Atlantic there were 29 at 11°07′N 17°25′W on 14 Feb 82 (PWGC). In the Gulf of Mexico RLW recorded ones and twos in April, May and July (possibly non-breeding birds).

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*

One at 51°06′N 13°18′W on 14 May 82 (ARL).

GULLS *LARIDAE*

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Twelve (of which seven adults) at 27°01′N 15°39′W on 24 Dec 80 (PWGC). The adults were described as having very dark grey mantle (which would indicate the Scandinavian race *L. f. fuscus*) and yellow legs. Further south the same observer reported nine at 22°11′N 17°17′W on 12 Feb 82 and in March saw them daily from 29°N 16°W to the Channel.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

Following five days of strong northerly winds ARL saw an immature at 42°14′N 12°20′W on 12 Feb 83. Similarly, following a period of prolonged northerly gales MGW described an immature gull at 180 miles SE of Bermuda which was probably this species.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Several observers reported sightings in the sub-tropical eastern North Atlantic outside the breeding season. Details are as follows: one immature at 23°15′N 17°07′W on 30 Aug 81 (PWGC), ten at 25°00′N 15°30′W on 10 Dec 82 (PCD) and five at 21°10′N 17°20′W next day (PCD). Fifty at 23°10′N 17°10′W on 19 Jan 83 (MGW) and 79 at 22°11′N 17°17′W on 12 Feb 82 (PWGC). In the Mediterranean WW reported a surprise sighting of a single adult in the Gulf of Genoa on 9 Dec 83.

Sabine's Gull *Xema sabini*

One at 22°11′N 17°17′W on 12 Feb 82 (PWGC); one adult feeding close to ship in Manzanillo Harbour on 7 May 83 (RHJ). A few adults at 40°38′N 9°42′W on 30 Sep 83 (WW).

TERNS *STERNIDAE*

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*

Numbers varying from one to eleven recorded daily at Cirebon, north coast of Java, from end Sep into Nov 82 (JWWa). They often fed close to the ship and on one occasion were seen entering the water to feed rather than from the surface. WW saw a few at Livorno Harbour on 4 Aug 83, small groups at Karachi anchorage on 30 Aug 83, Bombay anchorage in Sep 83 and Nov 83, and at the Great and Lesser Bitter Lakes, Suez, in Oct 83.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

A species not very often reported at sea. PWGC saw two, one landed on board at 41°02′N 11°03′W on 24 Mar 82.

AUKS *ALCIDAE*

Xantus Murrelet *Endomychura hypoleuca*

One at 36°15′N 122°13′W on 27 Aug 82 (RHJ).

Cassin's Auklet *Ptychoramphus aleuticus*

Four at 41°56′N 124°45′W on 28 Aug 82 and three off Vancouver next day (RHJ).

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

Several at 40°32′N 9°46′W on 4 Mar 83 (WW). A small group in the Strait of Gibraltar on 12 Dec 83 and at 38°21′N 9°37′W on 13 Dec 83 (WW).

Tufted Puffin *Lunda cirrhata*

Fifty 20 miles south of Unimak Island on 18 Aug 82 (MGF). On an eastward and a westward Pacific crossing respectively RHJ saw this Auk as follows: five at 46°52′N 146°04′E on 6 Oct 82, two at 51°18′N 162°53′E on 8 Oct and one at 52°48′N 170°48′E next day; five at 42°13′N 179°30′E on 27 Jun 83, three at 42°55′N 173°47′E on 28 Jun and two at 43°17′N 160°18′E on 1 Jul.

LANDBIRDS FROM SHIPS AT SEA 1983

Analysis by Commander M. B. Casement,
O.B.E., M.N.I., Royal Navy

The following landbird report sheets were received during 1983-84. Extracts are shown in the appropriate geographical sections using the observer's initials.

Captain P. W. G. Chilman, M.N. (11 sheets)
S.S. *Limopsis* — 4 Feb-5 May 81, Rotterdam - Singapore - Persian Gulf - Rotterdam. M.V. *Tricula* — 28 Aug-10 Sep 81, Richards Bay (S. Africa) - Rotterdam - Antwerp. 17 Sep-3 Nov 81, Antwerp - Richards Bay - Europoort. 6 May-22 April 82, Richards Bay - Rotterdam - Antwerp - Mississippi. 3 May-10 Jul 82, Mississippi - Rotterdam - Hampton Roads - Rotterdam. 17 Sep-3 Nov, Antwerp - Richards Bay - Europoort.

Engineer Officer S. J. Hingston, M.N. (5 sheets + 9 pages detailed fieldnotes).
M.V. *British Enterprise Two* — North Sea - Indefatigable Gas Field, Gorm and Dan Oilfields.

Captain R. L. Westwater, M.N. (7 sheets) — Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean.
M.V. *Barranca* — 9 Jul-17 Aug 80 and 16 Nov 82. M.V. *Bayano* — 17 May-25 May 83, 6 ASug-25 Sep 83.

Third Officer A. R. Louch, M.N. (6 sheets).
R.R.S. *Discovery* — 18 Feb 83, 23 Nov-23 Dec 83 (E. Atlantic off W. Africa).
R.R.S. *Challenger* — 15 Apr-24 May 83, E. Atlantic - S.W. Approaches.

Radio Officer W. Weitkovitz, German M.N. (11 sheets).
M.V. *Mandan* — 5 Apr 83, Med. M.V. *Neptune Marlin* — 6-31 Aug 83, Med; 14 Sep-28 Nov 83, Bombay - Felixstowe - Rotterdam - Bombay (via Suez) - Felixstowe.

Third Officer N. G. Cheshire, M.N. (2 sheets).
M.V. *Staffordshire* — 15 Mar-11 Apr 83, off S. Korea.

Second Officer P. C. Dyer, M.N. (2 sheets).
M.V. *Venture Service* — 8 Sep-14 Nov 83, Viking Field (North Sea).

Chief Officer R. H. Johnstone, M.N. (2 sheets).
M.V. *United Drive* — 1-27 Oct 83, Hsingkiang (China) to Panama via Aleutians.

The quantity and quality of reporting in Meteorological Logs continues to increase and includes many accurate and artistic sketches which greatly facilitate identification. I am indebted to Captain A. S. Young, M.N. and to Captain Houghton of the Met. Office, Bracknell for making the extracts available to me for inclusion in this analysis. These are indicated in the sections by the notation (Met).

A total of 10 Bird-examined-in-the-hand (BEH) forms were received during the period from ARL (1), PWGC (1), PCD (2) and RLW (6) including such species as Black-and-White Warbler *Mniotilta varia*, Chestnut-sided Warbler *Dendroica pensylvanica*, Palm Warbler *Dendroica palmarum*, Sora *Porzana carolina*, and Green Heron *Butorides striatus*.

RLW also enclosed a large number of excellent colour photographs which have been extremely useful as references for identification.

This analysis is presented in sections to cover the same geographical sea areas as in previous years.

SECTION A

EAST ATLANTIC (EAST OF 30°W) INCLUDING BAY OF BISCAY AND IBERLANT

1981

PWGC recorded a large number of landbird observations including the following:

Turtle Doves *Turtur streptopelia* on many occasions - 28 Apr in position 34°13′N 13°54′W (140′NE Madeira, 200′WNW Morocco); on 28 Aug 12°20′N 18°03′W (75′W Senegal); on 4 Sep, 9 in Bay of Biscay, 112′SW Ushant; on 22 Sep, 4 14°22′N 17°43′W (24′SW Dakar).

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* on 29 Apr, 38°49′N 12°13′W (125′W Lisbon).

Nightingale *Luscinia megarhyncos*, and also a probable Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinoides* on 28 Aug in position 12°21′N 18°03′W (75′W Senegal).

On 4 Sep a Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* when 68′SW Ushant (48°03′N 06°27′W).

On 22 Sep a Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* plus 2 unidentified landbirds on board all day (13°28′N 17°38′W - 48′W Gambia).

On 24 Oct 2 prob. Common Sandpipers *Tringa hypoleucos* when 215′SW Liberia (02°06′N 11°24′W).

On 25 Oct 2 Swifts/Pallid Swift *Apus apus/A. pallidus* were flying SSE at 150 ft in position 05°18′N 13°55′W (130′SW Sierra Leone).

On 26 Oct 2 Grey Herons *Ardea cinerea* arrived from east in position 05°21′N 11°38′W (90′SW Bijagos Archipelago). After 1 hr they departed N. Also on board were 4 Willow Warblers *Phylloscopus trochilus* and a male Wheatear. The latter stayed until 27/1800 and was very active catching cicadas and other insects. Wind NNW/2, partly cloudy.

On 28 Oct a juvenile "Willow/Chiff" *Phylloscopus* sp. was aboard in position 19°17′N 18°08′W (90′W Mauretania). 29 Oct a small "peep" *Calidris* sp. flew steadily past heading S. (Position 23°49′N 16°50′W - 52′W Spanish Sahara.)

At 1120 on 30 Oct, when 36′S Grand Canary (27°09′N 15°35′W) two Song Thrushes *Turdus philomelos* arrived and remained until dusk. Weather fine, NNE/2.

On 1 Nov a Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* (F) and a Whitethroat *Sylvia communis* were aboard in position 38°28′N 12°07′W (125′W x S Lisbon). Next day when 32′W x N C. Finisterre (43°17′N 09°55′W) another Whitethroat, or possibly the same bird, and also a Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* were recorded.

Early on 3 Nov at least 8 Skylarks *Alauda arvensis* were aboard feeding on insects, having arrived overnight (Ferrol, Spain 137′ South). The wind was SSW/2, weather overcast.

1982

PWGC again provided the majority of observations, in particular on passage northwards 6-27 March. On 6 Mar he noted a probable Lark-like Bunting *Fringilla impetuani* 115′W S. Africa (31°29′S 15°24′E). The wind was SSE/6, weather fine. On 16 Mar an African Jacana/Lily Trotter *Actophilornis africanus* was a surprise guest on board (208′SW Sherba Is, Sierra Leone 05°41′N 15°53′W). Wind was NE/3. 2 Turtle Doves were noted on 21 Mar when 65′S Canary Is (27°10′N 16°25′W), and on 23 Mar a group of 6 probable Black-tailed Godwits *Limosa limosa* flew past steadily ENE at about 100 ft (position 36°50′N 12°50′W - nearest land C. St. Vincent 185′E, 600′E Azores).

On 26 Mar a Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos* flew past heading NNE when 47°57′N 06°13′W (63′W Ushant) and at 1700, when 32′N Ushant, a male Redstart

Phoenicurus phoenicurus flew past heading NE. A female Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* arrived on board from SW.

On 23 Nov a Barn Owl *Tyto alba* was aboard M.V. *Seleydkye* (Met.) for 30 mins in the Bay of Biscay (47°06′N 5°00′W - 75′W nearest land).

1983

On 21 Jan M.V. *Bic Bilh* (Met.) recorded a Great-spotted Cuckoo *Clemator glandarius* 30′E Canaries (28°58′N 13°06′W).

On 28 Jan M.V. *Appleby* (Met.) recorded a Grey Heron on board 60′ W coast of Mauretania (19°25′N 17°50′W). It was very tired and remained 2 days.

On 18 Feb ARL noted a House Martin *Delichon urbica* following the ship (Co. 090°) but did not settle (38°46′N 15°39′W - 440′N Madeira).

On 5 Apr an Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* arrived on board S.S. *Meadow Bank* (Met.) in an exhausted state when 380′WNW C. Finisterre (44°01′N 17°49′W).

During the period 15 Apr-14 May ARL was operating in the general area 51°30′N 14°W ("Porcupine Seabright"), 140′SW Blasket Is (Eire) and recorded the following species:

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*. 15th (1) - mobbed by Kittiwakes *Rissa tridactyla*. Wind freshening SSW/5. 16th (2 - BEH); 26th (1) - 65′SW C. Clear; 5 May (1) am (2) pm - The wind which had been SE previous 30 hrs now NNW/6-8.

House Martin. Two on 5 May.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*. Single arr. 26 Apr, remained 30 hrs.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*. Single on 26 Apr.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*. Single on 26 Apr on board 30 mins. Wind backing from N to ESE with improved visibility. On 16 May, when in position 53°44′N 15°26′W (240′W Ireland) another settled briefly. Wind was NE/8.

Curlew *Numenius phaeopus*. One on 6 May.

Wheatear. One M, one F on board overnight 13/14 May. SW gales previous 24 hrs. Visibility good.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*. Three on 24 May when 3′W Barra Hd (56°45′N 07°40′W). Circled twice and flew off in direction of land.

On 29 Sep M.V. *Canadian Explorer* (Met.) recorded two Red-breasted Flycatchers *Ficedula parva* in position 50°23′N 21°48′W (540′W Ireland). They roosted on board overnight 28th and were around all day 29th.

On 20 Oct M.V. *London Enterprise* (Met.) recorded a prob. West African Wood Owl *Ciccaba woodfordi* when 50′W Sierra Leone (6°19′N 20°17′W). It arrived exhausted and was placed in sick-bay where it barely moved for 3 days. It had no eartufts but conspicuous "Dennis Healey eyebrows" and piercing eyes which in sunlight appeared a vivid blue. After 4 days it recovered and took off to fly strongly towards coast of Nigeria on 24th.

On 23 Nov ARL was in position 00°38′N 19°30′W (350′SSW Bijagos Archipelago) and recorded a Swallow circling ship, also a prob. Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* and a Whitethroat which stayed on board for 4 hrs.

On 12 Dec M.T. *Overseas Argonaut* (Met.) recorded a group of 6 Kestrels *Falco tinnunculus* which arrived at sunset and settled under bridge wings in position 05°26′N 21°ß33′W (480′W Bijagos). Two only remained on 13th and made occasional forays and appeared to be chasing flying fish. They were not interested in raw meat left out for them. Also on 13th was an unidentified egret. One kestrel only remained on 14th.

On 13 Dec, in position 02°06'N 23°22'W (60'SW Bijagos) ARL recorded an inidentified Sandpiper thought to be a Sanderling *Calidris alba*, and on 14th, a group of four probable Purple Herons *Ardea purpurea* flying N out of heavy rainstorm and then turned S. Heavy thunderstorms and showers had predominated previous 12 hrs. Position 04°49'N 21°54'W (520'SW Bijagos).

On 23 Dec ARL recorded a prob. Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus* which arrived exhausted in position 15°37'N 21°24'W (100'ESE C. Verde). Weather was overcast with good visibility. Wind NE/2.

SECTION B

ENGLISH CHANNEL AND NORTH SEA

1981

On 6 Sep PWGC was in position 52°02'N 03°53'E (6'NW Holland) and recorded on board a Middle Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopus medius* (red on head - no black), and a possible Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*.

On 10 Sep he was anchored 15'NNW Ostend (51°28'N 02°44'E) and recorded Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*, White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* (4), Swallow *Hirundo rustica* (c. 30), House Martin *Delichon urbica* (1+), Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*, Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca* (M) (later found dead), and an unidentified *locustella* warbler skulking and running mouse-like catching insects.

During the period 14-19 Oct SJH recorded the following observations from the Indefatigable Gas Field (52°19'N 02°35'E) 55'NE coast of Norfolk:

Starlings *Sturnus vulgaris*. Seen daily 14th (3), 15th (2), 16th (18), 17th (14 heading SW).

Meadow Pipits *Anthus pratensis*. 15th (4), 16th (1), 17th (1), 18th (2).

Redwings *Turdus iliacus*. 15th (9), 16th (8), 17th (3 singles flying overhead westwards), 18th heard calling overhead early a.m. 22 seen by day.

Fieldfares *Turdus pilaris*. 16th (1), 17th (3 overhead flying W), 18th (6).

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*. Singles on 15th and 18th.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*. Single from NE on 17th.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*. Adult M on 16th.

Lapwings *Vanellus vanellus*. Flock of 12 flying low westwards on 16th.

Short-eared Owls *Asio flammeus*. Two on 18th. One flew past SW fairly high at 1405, and a second arrived on platform from SE at 1450.

Bramblings *Fringilla montifringilla*. Three arrived on 18th from NE.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*. Single male on 18th.

Goldcrests *Regulus regulus*. A steady passage throughout 18th arriving from NE and departing SW. At least 20 seen to leave, but numbers on board built up steadily to max. 17 counted at dusk. Two found roosting on light fitting in recreation room and 5 others found dead.

The weather was generally favourable for migration 14th-17th with winds force 3 and good visibility, partly cloudy, but on 18th a NE gale developed p.m. with sharply deteriorating visibility. On night of 18th/19th a large-scale passage of Redwings took place with many heard calling in darkness and others fluttering round deck floodlights. The wind was NE/6-7. At first light several Meadow Pipits, and Blackbirds (10-12 in 1 hr), arrived during heavy rain and gale force winds. 15 more Goldcrests were found dead.

On 27 Mar PWGC recorded a Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* on board during dense fog 20 NNE Cherbourg (50°01′N 01°43′W).

During the period 3 Apr-11 May SJH was operating in Gorm Oilfield (55°35′N 04°48 E), 150′N Netherlands and 120′W Denmark, and recorded the following species:

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*. Singles on 3, 4 and 22 Apr.

Meadow Pipit. Singles on 4, 17, 21 Apr and 11 May.

Song Thrush on 6 Apr (1).

Starling. Singles on 14 and 17 Apr.

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*. One arr. 20 Apr from SW, circled several times and dep. N. Wind was N/1-2.

Yellow Wagtail. One on 22 Apr.

Willow Warblers *Phylloscopus trochilus*. 30 Apr (1), 7 May (2-3), 8 May (1).

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*. One male on 7 May.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*. A female on 7 May.

Chaffinches. Two males on 7 May.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocryptes minima*. One found asleep on deck 080100 May. After being examined and replaced in same spot it returned to sleep but flew off when disturbed at 0200. It appeared confused by platform flare and circled several times before being lost to sight.

Swallows *Hirundo rustica*. 10 May (2), 11 May (4).

The weather on 11 May was sunny, fine and clear with light airs, and several new species rested briefly on board:

Brambling (m), Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* (1), White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* (1), Whitethroat *Sylvia communis* (1), and Siskin *Carduelis spinus*.

SJH was again operating in a similar area (55°28′N 05°08′E), Dan Oilfield, 9 Jul-1 Sep and observed:

9 Jul. Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans* (M). Tame. Photographed. Wind SSE/2.

5 Aug. Willow Warbler catching flies, and Common Sandpiper *Tringa hypoleucos*. The latter was caught inside accommodation at 2100, kept overnight and released.

6 Aug. Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella* (1M), and "Willow/Chiff" (1).

15 Aug. Wheatear (1-2 juv), "Willow/Chiff" (1-2), Pied Flycatcher (1F juv, exhausted and later found dead), Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* (1 adult). Most were seen to arrive from N p.m. Wind was SW/5-6, 8/8 cloud and heavy rain showers.

16 Aug. A group of 31 Whimbrels *Numenius phaeopus* flew past heading S at wave-top height. The wind was SSW/5-6, 8/8 cloud.

20 Aug. Two Turnstones *Arenaria interpres* passed close heading S. Wind WSW/6.

26 Aug. A juv Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* was captured in wheelhouse, examined and released.

28 Aug. A male Wheatear and juv Pied Wagtail.

1 Sep. A Pied Wagtail landed briefly from N and Dep W. Wind NW/7.

On 28 Oct SJH rejoined his ship on location in Dan Oilfield and was informed by fellow officers of large "falls" of exhausted migrants during second week of October, with several hundreds dying on board. A search round the decks revealed the following dead: Meadow Pipits (27), Chaffinch (19 + 4 live), Goldcrests (47), Starlings (19 + 11 live), Bramblings (21 + 6 live), Linnet *Acanthis cannabina* (1) and Siskin (1). Some were long dead, others relatively fresh. Also on board were two Rooks *Corvus frugilegus*. Colleagues reported that a colony of about 30 Rooks were living aboard Dan E platform, which was a very small automated rig manned by

only 3 men. On Gorm C platform a Short-eared Owl was also reported living on board for almost a week, feeding on migrant birds.

On 29 Oct the weather deteriorated with overcast conditions, poor visibility and occasional rain with wind SSE force 6. Nevertheless, the passage of migrants continued throughout the day with many groups, especially of Starlings, arriving from the north and resting briefly on board before departing SE into the wind. Wheeling slowly round the base of the flame platform, often very low over the sea, was a vast flock of Starlings (estimated 500-1000). Other species recorded in the course of the day were Bramblings (5 +), Blackcaps (2), Chaffinch (1), Goldcrests (several), and a House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*. At 1310 a Short-eared Owl arrived from N with laboured flight low over the sea and passed close by heading SE, and shortly afterwards a Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus* and 4 Redwings likewise directly into the strong headwinds.

On 30 Oct the wind had veered to SW/4 and the passage of migrants continued, but SJH noted that the direction of departure was directly into the wind — W-SW. The many starlings were clearly exhausted and very thin. A maximum of 80 were counted on board at 1030 and fed greedily on bread, cereals and food scraps, but 27 were found dead in the course of the day. Blackbirds were noted in 2's and 3's, Fieldfares (2 groups of 3 and 13), Redwings (group of 9), Blackcaps (2), Goldcrests (2 - one died), Meadow Pipits (4). At 1545 a Water Rail *Rallidus aquaticus* was found asleep and brought to SJH who photographed and released it. It was lively and attempted to bite anyone who approached it while being held. Four Bramblings roosted overnight in the hanger.

The foul weather and also the passerine migration continued similarly throughout next day with the wind now Southerly force 5. Gulls were noted harassing migrants, and many arrived in a state of exhaustion including a Rook, at least 4 Bramblings (of which 2 died), Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* (one found dead), Starlings (at least 70 died), Skylarks *Alauda arvensis* (at least 3 died). A surprising sight was a juv. Blackcap feeding with the Starlings, and on several occasions it was seen begging for food from them. At midnight it was cold, with high winds and drizzle. 34 Starlings were still alive (22 found dead) and several survivors were noted roosting on the bodies of dead colleagues apparently insulating their feet from the cold steel decks. A Water Rail was caught in the galley, kept overnight and released next day.

The weather was little changed on 1 Nov and the passage and mortality continued. At 1100 another Water Rail arrived from N. At midnight 26 surviving Starlings provided a comic sight huddled together perched on fluorescent lights in the shelterdeck and swaying in unison to counteract the ship's motion. Every now and then a particularly violent wave caught them unawares and caused them to miscalculate, resulting in a mass panic.

On 2 Nov the weather was greatly improved with winds NW/4, sunny and excellent visibility, i.e. perfect migration weather, but little was to be seen. Many Starlings, both dead and survivors, were still aboard and a Rook was observed making a poor job of despatching an exhausted Starling. It was forced to drop the Starling by the attacks of two Carrion Crows *Corvus corone*, one of which was seen to tear it into pieces and swallow it. A male Brambling was adopted by the cook and became very tame, perching on his outstretched hand to feed on crumbs.

On 3 Nov conditions were again perfect, but apart from a few survivors still aboard little activity was seen. A few Fieldfares were heard passing overhead at 2200, also Starlings and Redwings in reduced numbers.

A Pied Wagtail was around the decks a.m. 4 Nov, but apart from a continued trickle of Starlings there was very little activity on 4 or 5 Nov.

Comment. So ended a dramatic example of the effect of adverse weather, the variety of passerines involved in autumn migration from Scandinavia, and the scale

of mortality. Their point of departure was presumably Southern Norway some 200'NNE, and it is clear that instead of waiting for more favourable weather most had taken off into headwinds. Perhaps the impulse to press on was reinforced by the cold weather and shorter daylength with winter fast approaching. It is also puzzling why many apparently adjusted their headings to fly into the wind instead of maintaining a constant direction. By heading SW on 3 Oct they forfeited any advantage they might have gained by maintaining a heading of SE and thereby being drifted eastwards towards the relative safety of land (Denmark).

This series of observations emphasise two truisms. Firstly the evidence of migration at sea level is misleading; one sees only the wreckage or "fall-out" from the much larger scale movements taking place unseen at high level (usually at about 5,000 ft.) and at night during fine weather. Secondly, the mechanism of bird navigation, and how birds compensate for wind drift when they cannot see the stars is more complex than many theories would suggest. Continued observations will help to solve the remaining mysteries.

During the period 8 Sep-14 Nov PCD made the following observations from M.V. *Venture Service* in Viking Field (53°30'N 02°E), 50'NE coast of Norfolk.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*. 8 Sep - caught in wheelhouse and examined. Dep. S.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*. One on 12 Sep. Dep. S.

Linnet (probable). Not clearly seen. Dep. SW.

Goldcrest. Singles on 4 Oct, 1 Nov and 14 Nov. Examined (BEH).

Whinchat. One on 4 Oct. Wind E/3.

Starlings. 30+ on 4 Nov, *c* 50 on 14 Nov.

Carrion Crows. 10-15 on 4 Nov.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*. First seen in distress 4 Nov. Later found dead.

Short-eared Owls. Four on 14 Nov, on board for over an hour.

On 4-5 Nov M.V. *Matio Thames* (Met.) recorded the following in position 52°37'N 02°13'E (7'SSW Smith's Knoll Lt. Vessel off coast of Norfolk).

Fieldfares. Flock arrived in bedraggled state at 042100.

Starlings. Small groups (5-6 in group) during day, numbers increasing night of 4th until about 200 before dawn. Mostly dispersed by daylight. On 5 Nov numbers increased rapidly to *c* 400. The weather was "poor to very poor". (N.B. The marked difference across the N. Sea off Denmark as recorded by SJH above.)

Long-eared Owls *Asio otus*. Two on 5th. Killed and fed liberally on birds caught. Unperturbed by crew, and remained perched on guardrails within 10 ft.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*. One on 5 Nov.

SECTION C

WEST ATLANTIC (West of 30°W) AND SOUTH ATLANTIC

1982

On 25 Jan PWGC recorded a Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* which arrived at 0915 and remained until dusk (position 36°35'N 70°25'W - 255'E coast U.S.A., 360'NW Bermuda). Wind was NNW/4, overcast.

On 1 Jul PWGC noted a Cowbird *Molothrus ater* and a Mourning Dove *Zenaidura macroura* on board. 38°22'N 64°25'W - 500'SE Nantucket Is; nearest land 335'S x E Nova Scotia. Wind was N x W 15.

On 11 Sep M.V. *La Sierra* (Met.) recorded a prob. Merlin *Falco columbarius* 32°06'N 70°59'W (SE'C. Hatteras).

On 11 Oct a Yellow-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus americanus* was observed closely for 30 mins. aboard S.S. *Acavus* (Met.) during "bad weather". 37°30'N 41°45'W (480'W Azores, 700'SE Newfoundland). On 20 Oct an American Redstart

Setophaga ruticilla came on board when approaching Maracaibo Channel in Gulf of Venezuela.

On 26 Oct M.V. *Almeda Star* (Met.) reported and photographed a very sodden and dishevelled Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* in approaches to New York (40°27′N 73°50′W).

On 12 Nov M.V. *Author* (Met.) was 1200′SE Bermuda (26°41′N 73°50′W) when at least 15 unidentified hirundines (prob. Swallows *Hirundo rustica*) arrived on board in a bedraggled state, also an unidentified Heron sp. arrived just ahead of a line squall. Wind was SW/4-5. Another visitor was a racing pigeon bearing a ring from Caracas, Venezuela.

1983

M.V. *London Enterprise* (Met.) recorded a prob. Green Heron *Butorides striatus* on 25 Sep in position 43°19′N 57°27′W (230′SE Nova Scotia). It was on board 10 mins. and dep. W.

On 30 Oct a Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* arrived on board M.V. *Resolution Bay* (Met.) (Captain W. A. Murison, member R.N.B.W.S.) in position 29°36′N 56°01′W (500′SE Bermuda). It was carrying a small black and white bird which it attempted to eat on wing but finally settled on board where it remained 2 days until 200′ from Lesser Antilles when it disappeared.

On 12 Oct M.V. *Canadian Explorer* (Met.) was in position 50°42′N 37°17′W (600′S C. Farewell, 550′E Newfoundland) when two Snow Buntings *Plectrophenax nivalis* were on board throughout most of day.

Purple Gallinule *Porphyrula martinica*
Gulf of Mexico, 9 July 1980
Photo: Captain R. L. Westwater, M.N.

SECTION D

GULF OF MEXICO AND CARIBBEAN

1980

RLW recorded a Purple Gallinule *Porphyrula martinica*, see photograph, in position 25°44′N 87°30′W (210′SE Louisiana) on 9 Jul.

On 17 Aug RLW took photographs of a Chestnut-sided Warbler *Dendroica pensylvanica* in winter plumage when 20′E Cozumel I., Mexico (20°10′N 86°43′N).

1982

On 16 Nov RLW reported an Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* 30′ESE P. Herrero, Mexico (19°11′N 86°55′N). It arr. N and roosted overnight on radar aerial.

1983

RLW made several trips from Mississippi to Cortes (Honduras) and back during the period 17 Mar-15 May and recorded and took a series of excellent photographs of an interesting variety of spring migrants.

17 Mar. A Green Heron *Butorides striatus* was found exhausted on deck, and also a Sora *Porzana carolina* in electrician's cabin. The wind was westerly force 6-7 with visibility 1-5 nm in rain. Position 24°31′N 86°55′W (177′N C. Catoche). Both were released on arrival Cortes on 19th.

On 3 Apr two Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* were on board for 6 hrs. in the same area. Wind was NNW/4-5, and on 8 Apr an Osprey circled ship for 30 mins. 4′N Chandeleur Is (30°07′N 88°52′W). It was photographed carrying a fish in its talons.

On 10 Apr when 12′E Is. Blanca (21°24′N 86°37′W) passengers included a Yellow-rumped Warbler *Dendroica coronata* (F) and a Ruby-throated Hummingbird *Archilochus colubris* (F). Both died.

On 15 Apr when 66′SE Mississippi S. passage (28°27′N 88°03′W) a Blue Grosbeak *Guiraca caerula* was on board 15 mins, a Green Heron, a Cattle Egret which remained 22 hrs., and a Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* attempted to land on the crane before dep. N. On 16 Apr (60′NNE C. Catoche) another Green Heron tried to land several times and a Cattle Egret circled and finally landed on containers. The wind was W x E/S and the course was Southerly.

At least 12 unidentified warblers were seen on 1 May (25°20′N 87°14′W - 275′S Mississippi delta), also 10 Cattle Egret arrived from S. at 0800 flying at 40 ft. and settled on crane. At 1500 a Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas* arrived from S. and remained 20 mins. before dep N. (200′S Mississippi).

On 8 May 3 Cattle Egret flew past heading N, and 6 later arrived from S and landed aboard (245′SSE Mississippi). A Cape May Warbler *Dendroica tigrina* (F) was on board for 30 mins., also a probable Orange-crowned Warbler *Vermivora celata* (98′SSE Mississippi).

On 15 May two Cattle Egrets and a Peregrine settled on board. The egrets remained overnight, and the Peregrine for 3½ hrs. perched on crane.

RLW made similar observations of the autumn migration in the same area:

6 Aug. 0830. Brown Pelicans *Pelecanus occidentalis*. Six flew overhead, heading SE (26°18′N 87°36′W - 190 ′ SE Mississippi, SW passage). A Barn Swallow was seen at 1600. Weather was cloudy with isolated showers, light airs.

On 7 Aug two Barn Swallows circled for 4 hrs., and also a single Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota* (19°53′N 86°46′W, 27′SSE Mexico).

On 18 Aug a Black-and-White Warbler *Mniotilta varia* was found hopping along the main deck. It was caught when asleep and photographed (18′SE Mexico).

On 24 Aug a Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx ruficollis* settled for 30 min. (23°23′N 87 01′W - 109′N C. Catoche). Wind was ENE/2.

At 1500 on 14 Sep a group of 28 Great Blue/White Herons *Ardea herodias* flew overhead in V-formation heading SE. Both blue and white birds were seen (24°50′N 87°20′W - 195′NNW C. Catoche). An hour later a second group of 24 flew past, also an American Redstart *Setophaga ruticilla* (M) which remained overnight and was photographed. An unidentified Vireo *Vireo* sp. was seen briefly.

On 18 Sep a Chuck-will's-widow *Caprimulgus carolinensis* was on board 7 hrs. (26°19′N 87°23′W - 185′SSE Mississippi). A group of 26 Cattle Egrets were heading S on 22 Sep (20°07′N 86°40′W - 21′SE Mexico), and on 24 Sep a Chestnut-sided Warbler (juv) was found dead, having apparently flown into crane during night (19°42′N 86°49′W - 37′SSE Mexico). On 25 Sep a Mourning Dove was observed flying E into wind (ENE/6). (25°52′N 87°20′W - 214′SE Mississippi).

On 3 Oct a Purple Gallinule was aboard M.V. *Bendelich* (Met.) in position 19°21′N 76°55′W (40′S Cuba), and on 31 Oct M.V. *Roachbank* (Met.) recorded a Peregrine in position 21°17′N 75°13′W (27′NE Cuba) which arrived carrying a small bird which it plucked and ate in front of wheelhouse. It remained overnight and dep. N. off Florida Keys.

SECTION E

MEDITERRANEAN

1983

On 31 Mar M.V. *Providence Bay* (Met.) recorded a Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* on board 90'E Malta (35°54′N 16°28′E) which remained overnight and dep. S.

On 1 Apr M.V. *Port Alberni City* (Met.) reported a Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* and numerous unidentified "sparrows" and hirundines 100′SE Malta (35°30'N 16°30′E) on 5 May. The wind was NE/3.

On 6 Aug WW recorded an Olive-tree Warbler *Hippolair olivetorum* on board several hours in position 37°N 18°E (110′SE C. Spartivento). On 7 Aug WW was 40′S Crete (34°30′N 24°28′E) and recorded a Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula albicollis* and 3 juv. Rose-coloured Starlings *Sturnus roseus* which remained several hours. Wind NW/4.

On 23 Sep WW recorded a Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* (F) in the Ionian Sea (35°43′N 21°34′E, 65′SW C. Matapan). Winds were moderate northerly. Another Wheatear was seen passing through the Straits of Messina on 24th, and a Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* in the Gulf of Lyons on 27 Sep. On 28 Sep WW noted Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans*, Robins *Erithacus rubecula* (2), Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* (F) and Swallow *Hirundo rustica* (2) in position 38°29′N 00°18′E (18′S Cape S. Antonio).

On 24 Sep M.V. *Devonshire* (Met.) recorded the following migrants on board when at Port Said anchorage: Turtle Doves *Streptopelia turtur* (7), Wheatear *Oenanthe* sp., Red-necked Nightjar *Caprimulgus ruficollis*, and Purple Gallinule *Porphyrio porphyrio*.

On 30 Sep M.V. *Galconda* (Met.) recorded an Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* on board for 3 hrs. (position 36°25′N 15°20′E, 35′NE Malta). It was photographed on mast, and a second was also seen. The Osprey departed when 36′W Malta.

On 13 Oct WW recorded a White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* 45′E C. Palos (37°46′N 00°13′E), and on 14 Oct a Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos* and a Robin in position 41°N 06°18′E (85′NW Sardinia). Crossing the Ionian Sea, 35′SE Cape Spartivento (37°30′N 16°50′E), in light SE winds, he recorded Skylarks *Alauda arvensis* (2), Swallows (12), Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*, Robin and a Chiffchaff. Several Swallows, a White Wagtail and a Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* were on board 20′SW Crete (35°07′N 23°08′E) on 18 Oct. Next day when 120′SE Crete (33°17′N 27°55′E) species included Turtle Dove, White Wagtails (several), Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*, Swallows (several), Chiffchaff, Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*, Collared Flycatcher, Isabelline Wheatears *Oenanthe isabellina* (at least 8), and Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* (F).

On 20 Oct WW recorded the following migrants aboard in Port Said outer anchorage: Stone Curlew *Burrhinus oedicnamus* (remained ½ hr.), Lesser Whitethroats *Sylvia curruca* (3), Wood Warbler *Sylvia borin*, Chiffchaffs (5 - all showing dark legs), Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius* (f), Cretzschmar's Bunting *Emberiza caesia* (F), Isabelline Wheatear, and Black Redstart.

SECTION F

RED SEA AND GULF OF ADEN

1983

WW recorded two Hoopoe *Upupa epops* on board for several hours on 12 Aug in central Red Sea (21°22′N 38°05′E). On 13 Aug in position 16°15′N 41°17′E (S. Red Sea) migrants included Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus*, Rufous Bushchat/Rufous Warbler *Cercotrichas galactotes* and a possible Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris* (flesh-coloured legs). On 14 Aug when 25′S Aden several Swallows *Hirundo rustica*, White-rumped Swift *A. affinis*, a Rufous Bushchat and a Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *Merops superciliosus* were identified. On 15 Aug a Curlew *Numenius phaeopus*, and 3 Swallows were on board, and a Swift sp. *A. apus* or *A. pallidus* attempted to land (position 12°05′N 50°39′E). Winds were southerly.

On 16 Sep WW was once more in the Gulf of Aden (13°50′N 50°12′E) and recorded Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*, Red-breasted Flycatcher, and two Turtle Doves *Streptopelia turtur*. On 18 Sep a Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis* was on board all day in S. Red Sea (17°19′N 40°48′E). On 21 Sep in Suez outer anchorage two Black Storks *Ciconia nigra* flew past, and also a small group of Little Egrets *Egretta garzetta*.

On 11 Oct M.V. *Liverpool Bay* (Met.) identified an Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* perched on a container when 5′ of Jeddah (21°33′N 38°58′E).

M.V. *Devonshire* (Met.) recorded a Roller *Coracias garrulus* and a prob. Scops Owl *Otus scops* 100′E Aden (13°10′N 40°50′E) on 16 Oct, and in S. Red Sea (15°N 42′E) on 17 Oct two Namaqua Dove.

On 23 Oct WW identified a Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* in central Red Sea (21°51′N 37°49′E), also two Turtle Doves and small groups of Swallows *Hirundo rusticola*. A Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* was on board on 24 Oct (17°04′N 40°50′E) and a European Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* 80′S Yemen Coast (13°50′N 51°N) on 28 Oct. Winds were NE/4-5, and it remained all day before departing in evening.

SECTION G

INDIAN OCEAN AND ARABIAN SEA

1981

On 16 Mar PWGC recorded a Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* in position 12°24′N 69°33′E (310′W India, 165′WNW Laccadive Is.). It remained on board 7 hrs. Course 318° towards Persian Gulf. Winds were NNE/4.

1982

On 6 Oct M.V. *Berkshire* (Met.) recorded a probable Redshank *Tringa totanus* in position 03°53′N 62°22′E (500′NE Seychelles, 600′W Maldives), and on 20 Oct a Collared Kingfisher *Halcyon chloris* 30 W Celebes (00°21′N 119°30′E).

1983

On 30-31 Aug WW identified the following in Karachi harbour: Red Kites *Milvus migrans* (several), Collared Doves *Streptopelia decaocto* (up to 4), Palm Doves *S. senegalensis* (up to 3), Rose-winged Parakeets *Psittacula krameri* (several), Hoopoe *Upupa epops*, White-cheeked Bulbul *Pycnonotus leucogenys*, Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa latirostris* (on board 30 mins.), Blyth's Reedwarbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum*, Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* (F), and several Indian House Crows *Corvus splendens*.

On 27 Oct WW saw a White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* 60′S Socotra (11°32′N 54°14′E), and on 28th several Swallows when 360′SE Socotra (10°27′N 60°08′E).

On 7 Nov WW identified the following species when 50′SW Kutch (21°40′N 68°33′E):

Reef Heron *Egretta gularis* - attempted to settle on board.
Bittern *Botaurus stellaris* - flying past.
Kestrel - flying past.
Bimaculated Lark *Melanocorypha bimaculata* - stayed briefly.
Short-toed Larks *Calandrella brachydactyla* (5) - very tame.
Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* - on board several hours.
Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva* (F) - remained several hours.
Hoopoe.

Note. It is interesting to compare similar observations by DMS over the same period - see page 53.

On 25 Nov WW identified a Booted Warbler *Hippolais caligata* on board briefly 200′SW Bombay (18°04′N 68°55′E), and on 27 Nov a Hoopoe 170′SE Kuria Muria Is. (15°19′N 57°13′E).

On 3 Nov M.V. *Ruddbank* (Met.) described, with an excellent sketch, a prob. Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* in position 5°53′N 88°40′E (250′SW Nicobar Is.).

On 11 Nov M.V. *British Skill* (Met.) recorded a Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica* circling and chasing dragonflies - 300′W Cocos Is. (11°23′W 92°10′E).

SECTION H

PERSIAN GULF AND GULF OF OMAN

1981

On 25 Mar PWGC identified an Isabelline Shrike *Lanius isabellinus* in position 27°05′N 50°13′E (23′NE Ras al Ju'aymah). It was seen to catch a moth. Wind was N x E/3, cloudy.

1983

On 4 Oct M.V. *Providence Bay* (Met.) saw two Bee-eaters *Merops apiaster* on board in Persian Gulf. One was found dead next day.

On 6 Oct M.V. *Devonshire* (Met.) recorded a Masked Shrike *Lanius nubicus* which remained on board all day when at anchor off Ras al Tannurah.

SECTION I

PACIFIC, CHINA SEA, YELLOW SEA AND PHILIPPINE SEA

1982

During period 19-22 Apr M.V. *Act 2* (Met.) noted a large variety of landbirds 180°E China (29°30'N 125°04'E) but only Little Green Heron *Butorides striatus* was identifiable.

On 18 Jun M.V. *Andes* (Met.) recorded a Watercock *Gallinicrex cinerea* on board in position 31°51' N 124°10'E (120°E China).

On 1 Oct RHJ recorded the following when 45'S Port Arthur (38°09'N 121°38'E):

Scops Owl *Otus scops* - on board 3 days while heading SE across Yellow Sea south of Korea.

Goshawk *Accipiter* sp. n.k.

Turtle Doves *Streptopelia* sp. n.k. (12).

Phylloscopus Warblers - yellow rump and eye-stripe, thought possibly Lemon-rump *P. proregulus* or Ashy-throated *P. maculipennis*.

On Oct 2 White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* (12) were on board 35'SW Quelpart Is. (Korea) (33°35'N 125°44'E). Some stayed 4 days but numbers diminished daily. Wind was NE/3.

On 3 Oct RHJ noted a prob. Jack Snipe *Lymnocryptes minimus* 30'E Korea (35°24'N 130°02'E). It was seen circling ship during next 3 days.

On 6 Oct a possible Tawny Owl *Strix aluco* was seen resting on superstructure, and about 12 Pipits *Anthus* sp. were recorded when 90'E Sakhalin Is. (46°52'N 140°04'E).

On 16 Oct a Long-eared Owl *Asio otus* came aboard 45'NW Kuril Is. (47°28'N 15°56'W). The wind was NE/Force 8. After being chased by Chinese cooks (the meat at back of neck is said to be highly prized Chinese delicacy!) it took refuge on fluke of port anchor where it remained for 3 days.

On 24 Oct RHJ reported a flock of Egrets, probably Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*, and a prob. Merlin *Falco columbarius* (F) on board which remained 2 days. Two hirundines (Swallow/Martins) were also seen. Position 15°32'N 103°24'W (150'SW Mexico). On 27 Oct a Peregrine *Falco peregrinus* was seen to catch and eat an unidentified small bird 65'SW Nicaragua (10°04'N 87°07'W). The falcon left p.m. on 28th.

On 26 Oct M.V. *Ruddbank* (Met.) reported a Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* on board drinking rain water, also a Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flave*. Position 24°52'N 126°55'E (270'E Taiwan).

On 11 Nov M.V. *Anco Chaser* (Met.) reported a Long-eared Owl in position 38°22'N 150°22'E (600'E Japan), and a Peregrine (male) passed overhead flying N on 15 Nov 90'SW El Salvador (12°36'N 91°46'W).

On 18 Feb M.V. *Ruddbank* (Met.) was 140′SE Vietnam (9°N 110°10′E) when two prob. Crow-billed Drongos *Dicrurus annectans* arrived on board. One flew into wheelhouse.

On 3 Mar a group of several Eurasian Tree Sparrows *Passer montanus* arrived on board M.S. *Arafura* (Met.) in position 29°17′N 137°09′E (300′SE Japan) and stayed for 2 days.

On 4 Apr a Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* circled M.V. *Strathfyne* (Met.) 50′N Taiwan.

On 21 Apr M.V. *W. A. Mather* (Met.) reported numerous small birds resting on deck in E. China Sea 160′E Shanghai (30°32′N 124°42′E). They included swallows, wagtails and a small falcon.

On 16 Jun a prob. Plumed Egret *Egretta intermedia* overtook and landed briefly on board M.V. *Garzana* (Met.). Course was 065° and position 33°38′N 150°56′E (500′SE Japan).

On 30 Aug a group of 7 prob. Common Egrets *Casmerodius albus* landed on board M.V. *Castle Venture* (Met.) 00°45′S 109°50′W (1100′W Galapagos Is.). One remained 48 hrs. later with ship proceeding westwards even further from nearest land.

On 7 Oct 3 prob. Plumed Egrets arrived on board M.V. *Aurora* (Met.) 200′E Luzon (Philippines) and remained 2½ days.

On 22 Oct M.V. *New Zealand Caribbean* (Met.) recorded a Peregrine Falcon perched on mainmast in position 20°51′S 113°18′W (200′W South America and 700′E French Polynesia). It remained all day occasionally making forays up to about ¼ mile away and finally did not return. The prevailing wind was easterly.

Two prob. Common Egrets rested on board M.V. *Port Alberni City* (Met.) for 48 hrs. in position 12°26′N 92°10′W (220′S Mexico) on 20 Nov, and on 26 Nov a possible Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis* was seen to catch and eat four small seabirds in position 21°12′N 132°45′W (360′SE Okinawa).

SEABIRD OBSERVATIONS FROM METEOROLOGICAL REPORTS

By Captain Anthony S. Young, M.N.

We have received 56 seabird reports from 50 ships of the Voluntary Weather Reporting fleet for the period covering late 1982 (when I took over) to January 1984, of which some are only single observations while two or three are of complete passages. For example: M.V. *Falmouth Bay*, Busan, Korea to Long Beach, California - 14 to 25 November 1983, and this was qualified as "by no means comprehensive" by the observer Mr B. A. Mullen, Radio Officer; and also M.V. *Canadian Explorer*, a passage from U.K. to the St. Lawrence, via Belle Isle, observer Mr C. M. Pepper, Chief Officer, makes very interesting reading.

Reports cover 64 species, of which the petrels form the largest group, with the largest numbers sighted being Kittiwakes *Larus tridactyla* in the North Pacific, from a few to many hundreds, which also applies to the Fulmars *Fulmarus glacialis* in the western North Atlantic. Sooty Terns *Sterna fuscata* sightings were also quite numerous. A number of birds were reported found on board, sometimes from design though frequently by accident. In several cases the birds would certainly not have survived but for the efforts of those on board — most gratifying. The tropic-birds seem accident prone, due, I think, to their inquisitive nature, and the attraction of ships' lights at night.

The standard of reporting varies very considerably from those with excellent artistic sketches and detailed diagnostics to the crude and brief, which at times tends to leave much to the imagination though I have tried to give every report due attention. A few photos also have accompanied reports, some very good, which help considerably with positive identifications. As always, juveniles and immatures cause confusion and uncertainty, with the limited details provided.

An interesting report was that of a Broad-billed Prion *Pachytila vittata* found on board the M.V. *Resolution Bay*, 14 May 1983, at 41°40'S 160°11'W. The report included a very good sketch of the head by the Master, Captain W. A. Murison.

My efforts to date appear to be favourably received, though I can hardly do justice to the expertise of my predecessor Captain Gerald Tuck, R.N., to whom I am most grateful for introducing me to the Society some few years ago. I am hopeful of encouraging new members by contact through the Met. Reports with the kind assistance of the Met. Officers with whom I correspond, and now having got matters reasonably well underway — we shall see.

Captain A. S. Young, Harwood, 24 Castle Road, Cottingham, North Humberside HU16 5NA.

OBSERVATIONS AT SOUTH GEORGIA IN 1982

By Lieutenant-Commander M. K. Barritt, R.N.

From 19 August 1982 to 1 January 1983 H.M.S. *Hecate* was on station as South Atlantic Ice Patrol Ship and Falkland Islands Dependencies Guardship. During the period the vessel conducted several patrols of the South Georgia coast from Bird Island, north about, to Undine South Harbour, and also carried out hydrographic surveys off the indented coasts NW of the 1982 Joint Services Expedition area.

Ten-minute observation cards were completed on passage and during surveys in co-operation with embarked British Antarctic Survey (B.A.S.) scientists from the field station at Bird Island. These observations confirm the picture of South Georgia avifauna given by Lieutenant M. D. R. Kelly, Royal Navy, *Sea Swallow* 32: 4-11.

The following species are present throughout littoral waters:

Giant petrel *Macronectes* sp., Pintado Petrel *Daption capense*, Southern Black-backed Gull *Larus dominicanus*, Blue-eyed Cormorant *Phalacrocorax atriceps*.

Observations at specific localities

a. BAY OF ISLES. This area is regarded by B.A.S. ornithologists as one of the most important habitats for South Atlantic birds. On Salisbury Plain the island's largest colony of King Penguins *Aptenodytes patagonica* breed. In November 1982 the young were present in such numbers that from seaward they appeared like an expanse of brown bushes on the slopes. The offshore islets are also important breeding sites and are inhabited, amongst others, by:

Wandering Albatross *Diomedea exulans*, Grey-headed Albatross *Diomedea chrysostoma*, Light-mantled Sooty Albatross *Phoebetria palpebrata*, White-chinned Petrel *Procellaria aequinoctialis*.

Several species of prion are present and breed on the islets. They may be identified by examination of bills on dismembered carcasses left by predatory skuas.

There are small groups of Gentoo Penguin *Pygoscelis papua* on the beaches.

b. POSSESSION BAY. One colony of about 180 King Penguins, adults and chicks, was observed on the western shore north of Albert Point. Some groups were up to 150 feet above sea-level.

c. ANTARCTIC BAY. One colony of King Penguins, about 100-200 in number including chicks, was observed on the northern shore on the point west of Windy Bay. There were a few small

groups of 5-10 penguins on the shore at the western entrance. They were probably Gentoo. Other species observed in the Bay were:

Grey-headed Albatross *Diomedea chrysostoma*, Snow Petrel *Pagadroma nivea*, Antarctic Tern *Sterna vittata*.

d. FORTUNA BAY. Two groups of King Penguins, one of 180 birds and one of 290, were seen below Breakwind Ridge. Other than the common species enumerated above, Antarctic Tern were present, and there were Yellow-billed Sheathbills *Chionis alba* on the eastern shore.

e. STROMNESS BAY. A small colony of Gentoo Penguins dwell on the shore on the western perimeter of the deserted whaling station at Leith.

f. CUMBERLABD BAY EAST. A small King Penguin group has a traditional haunt near the Grytviken cemetery. There are others in the vicinity of Hope Point. The common South Georgian birds can all be seen in the Bay, together with Antarctic Tern, and South Georgian Teal *Anas flavirostris* along the shores of King Edward Cove.

The author spent a night engaged in survey observations on Right Whale Rocks. By scrambling down the snow slopes, following eerie subterranean cries and flitting shapes, he located burrows of breeding prions, but no birds were handled to identify the

Gentoo Penguins *Pygoscelis papua*
at Leith Harbour, South Georgia, 1982
Photo: Lt.-Cdr. M. K. Barritt, R.N.

species. A group of predatory skuas was present on the summit of the island. Yellow-billed Sheathbills were present on the rocky shoreline. All the common species were observed in flight together with Snow Petrels, Antarctic Tern, and South Georgia Teal.

g. DRYGALSKI FJORD. Some Gentoo breeding sites were seen, one of them being just inside Larsen Harbour. Not many birds were present.

Blue-eyed Cormorants were seen on the snow surface in Larsen Harbour. South Georgian Teal were present in the inlets of the harbour.

Other species seen were Giant petrel, White-chinned Petrel, Pintado Petrel, Snow Petrel, Wilson's Storm-petrels *Oceanites oceanicus*, Antarctic Terns, and Yellow-billed Sheathbills.

Lieutenant-Commander M. K. Barritt, Royal Navy, H.M.S. *Echo*, B.F.P.O. Ships.

REPORTS OF SEABIRDS RECEIVED IN 1973-1977
PART I

By Dr W. R. P. Bourne

During the mid 1970s the volume of reports of seabirds received by the Royal Naval Birdwatching Society progressively swamped the organisation dealing with them. Since Stephen Chapman relieved the pressure by taking over the new reports in 1978 we have attempted to trace as many outstanding reports as possible, and those of birds examined in the hand have already been listed in *Sea Swallow* 31: 30-32. The remainder, amounting to 1,068 pages of systematic observations by approximately fifty observers, together with the more important observations from Meteorological Logs attributed to the reporters, are summarised here, together with some additional observations of general interest. The original records will be deposited with the files in the Sub-department of Ornithology of the British Museum (Natural History) for public consultation at Tring. If anything important remains unaccounted for we would be grateful if you could let us know about it.

It will be obvious from the selection of material presented here that with the growth of a popular interest in seabirds the task of analysing such a collection of material fully by hand is becoming impossible (though it has currently eased, let us hope temporarily, owing to the sad decline of the Merchant Navy). Meanwhile, a number of people have been exploring the use of computers to process similar records on a local scale in several different parts of the world, and the long-awaited day is at last arriving when it is becoming economically feasible for anyone to undertake this at

home. In order to obtain full benefit from such developments it is also becoming increasingly urgent to agree on a standard form for recording observations so that they can be combined for processing, and it is to be hoped that this will soon receive general consideration.

Such developments have been hampered in the past by difficulties over the identification of seabirds, since if unreliable records are fed into computers the result is chaos. While marine ornithologists were originally fortunate in having the first of all "field" (or sea) guides, W. B. Alexander's pioneer *Birds of the Ocean* (Putnam, 1928), it has long become woefully out of date. Fortunately it has now been replaced by two complementary successors catering for opposite ends of the market, including penny plain regional variations of a *Field guide to the seabirds* by our former Chairman Gerald Tuck and H. Heinzel (Collins, 1978), and a twopence coloured *Seabirds - an identification guide* by P. Harrison (Croom Helm, 1983). Both are arranged similarly in the fashionable manner with separate sections of comparative annotated plates, species descriptions and distribution maps, and achieve about the same level of accuracy, but whereas the first is cut to the bare minimum so that it will appeal more to beginners, the second is padded with a vast amount of comparative detail and stray information collected all round the world for those who wish to learn more. I will comment on some incidental points later.

Unfortunately neither guide says much about observational technique, and what there is is rather misleading, as where Harrison claims "it is becoming normal practice to make a 180° scan of the sea immediately ahead of the ship at ten minute intervals; all other sightings between scans are recorded, including hourly counts of species in the wake", and then goes on to give the addresses of half the seabird groups wrongly. In fact, when Poul Jesperson first began systematic observations of birds at sea between the wars he started by recording the birds seen in a day, and while this has since been whittled down to first an hour and then periods of ten minutes for purposes of convenience, considerably more sustained observation is normally required to determine accurately everything that is present, and the observations normally need to be lumped over longer periods for analysis by anyone who has not yet got a computer.

Once one has obtained an adequate series of observations, one also encounters problems over the way in which they should be expressed. Initially it was considered sufficient merely to report the number of birds seen, in the hope that despite variations in the observers and conditions of observation the results obtained might be comparable with each other for different areas and over the course of time. This immediately raises the problem whether they are best expressed in terms of birds per unit time regardless of the distance covered, or birds per unit distance regardless of the time taken, since ships vary in their speed. It seems likely that since

flying birds travel about faster than ships their numbers may be better expressed in terms of the time concerned, whereas those of birds on the water that do not move about much may be better expressed in terms of the distance covered, though it is difficult to separate the two types of observation, and in any case it does not make much difference as long as the figures obtained are merely compared with each other.

The situation becomes more complicated with recent attempts to calculate the total number of birds present and then their "energy" (meaning food) consumption to determine their role in the life of the sea. Here attempts have been made to count the total number of birds occurring within a certain distance of the ship, determined by the use of a rangefinder such as that described by D. Heinemann (*Journal of Wildlife Management* 45: 489-493). Personally I am filled with doubt by such calculations, which take inadequate account of variations in the conspicuousness and density of the birds, the way that they move around, and the nature of their diet, and tend to be related to politically-sensitive speculations that they eat large amounts of fish (*Marine Pollution Bulletin* 14: 294-296). The additional calculations moreover seem rather unnecessary since the totals obtained appear to vary in much the same way as those obtained by direct observation (K. D. Powers, *Journal of Field Ornithology* 53: 289-304), and have a less direct relation to real life, so that it seems better to keep to the direct observations.

Finally, as I pass the torch on to Stephen Chapman I should like to express my appreciation of the work carried out for twenty years by devoted members of the R.N.B.W.S. who have helped lift the subject of marine ornithology from the level of casual observation to that of abstruse calculations in university departments, and hope that they will continue to help it remain in touch with reality.

OBSERVERS AND VOYAGES

(R - report sheets, C - census sheets, N - pages of notes)

Radio Officer N. A. Allison, M.V. *Welsh Voyager*. Scotland - Caribbean - St. Lawrence. Aug-Sep 71 (4R).

Captain T. W. Barnett. M.V. *Purnea*. Rotterdam - Cape of Good Hope - Red Sea. Jan-Mar 71 (4R). M.V. *Gladiola*. North Pacific. Apr-Aug 73 (2R).

Lieutenant-Commander M. K. Barritt, H.M.S. *Arethusa*. Portsmouth - west Mediterranean, Oct-Dec 72 (5R). Iceland Patrol, Apr-Aug 73 (24R/C). H.M.S. *Hydra*. Suva - Sydney - Singapore - Male - Singapore - Fiji - Brisbane - Fiji, Sep 73-Jul 74 (39R/C). H.M.S. *Beagle and Bulldog*. Portsmouth - Jamaica and return, Mar-Jun 75 (9R). Portsmouth - Trinidad - Florida and return, Oct 75-Apr 76 (9R).

Mr J. Booth (JBo), M.V. *Ravensworth*. Panama - San Francisco - U.K., Sep-Nov 75 (1N).

Radio Officer J. Breen (JBr). U.K. - Panama - New Zealand and return, Aug-Dec 73 (2N).

Mr C. V. Bullock, *Sir Winston Churchill*. Newfoundland - U.K. Aug 76 (2C/N).

Captain P. W. G. Chilman, M.V. *Donax*. Liverpool - Cape of Good Hope - Persian Gulf - Sydney - Persian Gulf - Cape of Good Hope - Le Havre, Sep.-Dec 72 (13C). Persian Gulf - Cape of Good Hope - Rotterdam - West Africa -

Gothenburg - Cape of Good Hope - Persian Gulf - two trips to Singapore, Apr-Aug 73 (15C). S. France - Cape of Good Hope - Persian Gulf - Singapore, Oct-Dec 73 (6C). Shetland - Cape of Good Hope - Persian Gulf - Tokyo - Persian Gulf - Cape of Good Hope - U.K., Feb-Jul 74 (20C). Cape Town - Persian Gulf - U.K., Nov 74-Jan 75 (11C). Rotterdam - Persian Gulf and return, May-Jul 75 and again Oct 75-Jan 76 (12C).

Messrs. P. Coombs, R. I. P. Coutts and R. Leitch, R.R.S. *Shackleton*. U.K. - Durban, Nov 74-Feb 75 (13C). Seychelles area, Jun-Aug 75 (12R). Durban - Falklands - several trips to Scotia Sea - Callao, Nov 75-Mar 76 (47R/C).

Flt.-Lt. D. St. J. Court Smith. Wake Island (3N).

Mr R. M. Curber, M.V. *Monte Ulia*. London - Canaries and return, Sep 74 (37R).

Mr W. F. Curtis, R.F.A. *Tidereach*. Canaries - St Helena - Gough Island - Cape Town - Beira, Apr-May 73 (23R). Portland - Durban - Mombasa - Diego Garcia - Beira - Mauritius - Cape Town - Tristan - St Helena - Europe, Aug-Dec 74 (38R). R.F.A. *Tidepool*. Scotland - Iceland and return, Feb-May 76 (14C).

Mr Ian Deeney, H.M.S. *Bacchante*. West European waters, Feb-Jun 75 (5R/C).

H.M.S. *Endurance*. U.K. - Antarctic and return, Oct 73-May 74 (8N).

Radio Officer M. G. Finn, M.V. *Anco Stane*. U.K. - New York - Panama - Singapore - Chittagong, Oct 76-Jan 77. M.V. *Anco Templar*. U.K. - Los Angeles, May-Jun 77 (9R).

Lieutenant-Commander C. Furse and G. Bruce, H.M.S. *Endurance*. Buenos Aires - Elephant Island - Punta Arenas, Nov 70-Apr 71 (15N).

Mr P. N. Gunson, M.V. *Marker*. Louisiana - Durban - Malagasy - Calcutta, Oct-Dec 73 (8N).

Mr I. G. Hall, R.F.A. *Olwen*. Rosyth - Montevideo, Jun 72 (3R). R.F.A. *Regent*. Gibraltar - Cape Town - Gan - Singapore, Jun-Jul 73 (9R). U.K. - north Norway, Feb-Mar 74 (6R).

Commander M. G. T. Harris, H.M.S. *Sovereign*. Devonport - North Pole and return, Oct 76 (7R).

Mr P. Harty, H.M.S. *Ark Royal*. U.K. - Malta and return, Oct-Nov 74 (2R).

Captain R. S. Hawkins, S.S. *Texaco Frankfurt*. Persian Gulf - Cape of Good Hope - western Europe and return, Dec 73-Feb 74 (8C). S.S. *Texaco North America*. Persian Gulf - Japan - Cape of Good Hope - Europe - Persian Gulf, Aug-Dec 74 (7R).

H.M.S. *Hecla*. Observations in North Atlantic, Apr-Sep 72 (2N).

Engineer Officer S. J. Hingston, M.V. *Sugar Carrier*. Panama - Queensland, Apr-May 75 (3R). M.V. *Sugar Refiner*. Panama - California - Singapore - Queensland - Cape Town - London, Sep-Dec 75 (6R).

Mr M. F. Holloway, H.M.S. *Endurance*. Montevideo - Falklands - Santos - Europe, Mar-Apr 74 (4C).

Captain J. Jenkins. Great Australian Bight, Jul-Oct 71 (22N).

Mr D. Joern. West African waters and return to Europe, Aug-Oct 74 (4N).

Mr W. T. Jones, M.V. *Furness Bridge*. Two return trips Europe - Cape of Good Hope - Persian Gulf, Mar-Jun 73 (10C).

Second Officer R. W. Joughin, M.V. *Drina*. Europe - Rio and return, Jul-Aug 73 (9R). M.V. *Sailor Prince*. London - Haifa and return, Tripoli and return, Jul-Oct 75 (4R). London - Tripoli and return, Jun-Jul 76 (2R).

Mr P. K. Kinnear, M.V. *Perla Dan*. U.K. - Montevideo - Falklands - Argentine Islands, Dec 70-Jan 71, and return in M.V. *John Biscoe*. Mar-May 72 (27N).

Mr T. Leighton, M.V. *Ocean Bridge*. U.K. - Brazil twice, then Cape Town, Mar-Jun 75 (8R).

H.M.S. *Lowestoft*. Iceland Patrol, May 76 (2R).

Mr D. H. Mobberley, M.V. *Mountpark*. Rouen - Panama - Japan, Jan-Mar 73. West Australia - northwest U.S.A. - Japan - California, Apr-Jun 73 (37R). M.V. *Naess Viking*. Persian Gulf - Milford Haven - Rio - Cape of Good Hope - Japan, Oct 73-Jan 74 (17R). M.V. *Nordic Louisiana*. Europe - Gulf of Mexico, Mar-Apr 75; Sep-Nov 75; twice Sep-Nov 76; Jun-Jul 77 (34R).

Captain A. J. Palmer, M.V. *Deido*. Middlesborough - Freetown and return, Jun-Jul 76 (5R).

Captain G. H. Phillips, M.V. *Lagos Palm*. Lagos - Liverpool, Nov 73 (1C).

Second Officer J. Podmore, M.V. *Manchester Concorde*. Four passages U.K. - Montreal, Aug-Dec 76 (24R). M.V. *Al Jabiriah*. Florida - Gibraltar - Suez - Persian Gulf, Aug-Sep 77 (4R).

Captain W. C. W. Price, S.S. *Mobil Daylight*. Nigeria - Le Havre - Cape of Good Hope - Persian Gulf, Jan-Mar 73 (3R). Persian Gulf - France, Sep 73 (1R). M.V. *Satucket*. Tahiti - Panama, Jan 75 (1R). M.V. *Mobil Transporter*. Cape Town - Delaware, Sep 75 (2R). Cape Town - Ivory Coast, Jan 76 (1R). Panama - Japan, Apr 76 (1R). Tropical Atlantic, Oct 76 (1R).

Captain K. Salwegter, M.V. *Putten*. Le Havre - Alexandria - Gulf of Mexico, March-Jul 73 (14R). M.V. *Amstelhof*. California - north China - northern Australia - Durban - Marseilles - St Lawrence, Sep 73-Jan 74 (27R). M.V. *Voorne*. Panama - N. China - N. Australia - Vancouver - North Korea - Alaska, Mar-Sep 74 (35R). M.V. *Walcheren*. London - Cape Town - Melbourne - Durban - Alexandria - St Lawrence - London, Feb-Jun 75 (28R). M.V. *Hollands Brink*. Durban - Yokohama - Sydney - Basrah, Sep-Dec 75 (9C). M.V. *Amstelmeer*. Sardinia - New Orleans - Hamburg - Gulf of Mexico - Suez - Port Elizabeth, June-Nov 76 (22R).

Captain D. M. Simpson, M.V. *Pacific Builder*. Persian Gulf oil installations, Feb-Mar 77 (2R).

Lieutenant-Commander R. A. Smith, U.S.S. *Duluth*. San Francisco - Seattle - Diego, Jul 74 (6R).

Mrs M. K. Stobbs, M.V. *Relume*. Persian Gulf, Apr 73 (3R).

Dr R. Summers. Cape Town - Southampton, Apr 77 (4N).

Mr A. van Gaans, M.V. *Overijssel*. England - Puerto Rico, May 76 (14R).

Captain J. W. Waldie (JWWa), M.V. *Westminster Bridge*. Japan - W. Australia - Cape Town - U.K. Dec 72-Jan 73 (4R). M.V. *Pacific Bridge*. Brasil - Cape Town - Japan - Bass Strait - Cape Town - Gibraltar - Taranto, Mar-Jul 73 (13R/C). M.V. *Derbyshire*. Cabot Strait - River Plate - Lisbon, Dec 73-Feb 74 (5R/C). M.V. *Coventry City*. Freetown - Corunna, Apr 74 (1R). M.V. *Atlantic Bridge*. Gibraltar - U.S.A. - Panama - Japan - Queensland - Rotterdam, Jun-Sep 74. M.V. *Herefordshire*. Genoa - Cape of Good Hope - Red Sea - Sumatra - Durban - Antwerp, Jan-Mar 75 (12R/C). M.V. *Atlantic Bridge*. Europe - St Lawrence - Liberia - St Lawrence - Panama - Japan, Jun-Oct 75 (17R). M.V. *Oxfordshire*. Antwerp - Suez - Japan - Suez - Japan Suez, Jan-May 76 (10R). M.V. *Mersey Bridge*. Texas - Europe - Liberia - Europe - U.S.A. -Europe - U.S.A. - Panama - Japan, Aug-Dec 76 (15R). M.V. *Atlantic Bridge*. Rotterdam - Gulf of Mexico and return, Mar-Apr 77 (4R).

Radio Officer W. Weitkowitz, M.V. *Tanga*. Europe - Suez - E. Africa and return, twice, Oct 75-Mar 76 (12R). M.V. *Dalia*. Persian Gulf - Mombasa and return, Mombasa - Reunion and return, Nov 76-Jan 77 (8R). M.V. *Annemarie Kruger*. Persian Gulf - S. Korea and return, twice - Europe, Apr-Aug 77 (16R/C).

Captain J. W. Welch (JWWe), S.S. *Moreton Bay*. Cape Town - Fremantle, Apr-May 75 (4R). S.S. *Botany Bay*. Cape Town - Fremantle - Sydney, Oct 75 (6R). S.S. *Moreton Bay*. Cape Town - Sydney, Mar 76 (3R). S.S. *Flinders Bay*. Cape Town - Sydney, Jan-Feb 77 (7R).

Captain R. R. Will, M.V. *Rotherwick Castle*. Hamburg - Port Elizabeth - Europe - Cape Town - Mediterranean - Cape Town - Europe - Port Elizabeth - Europe - Suez - Cape Town - Europe - Suez - Mauritius - Europe - Ascension - St Helena - Cape Town - Mauritius - Mombasa - Cape Town - Europe - S. Africa, Mar 74-Apr 77 (34R).

Captain A. S. Young, M.V. *Vimeira*. Europe - St Lawrence - Europe, May-Jun 75 (2R). M.V. *Norse Trader*. Southern South America - Vancouver - Panama - Brazil - Lisbon, Dec 75-Apr 76 (16R). Antwerp - Santos - Taranto - Baltic - Santos, Aug 76-Jan 77 (13R). M.V. *Volnay*. Virginia - Panama - Taiwan - Hiroshima - Suez - Antwerp, May-Aug 77 (15R).

PENGUINS *SPHENISCIDAE*

Both field guides appear mistaken in mapping breeding penguins at Juan Fernandez, and Tuck in showing Adelie Penguins *Pygoscelis adeliae* breeding at South Georgia. It seems simpler to

follow the method adopted by Harrison of treating the Royal Penguin as a race of the Macaroni under the name *Eudyptes chrysolophus schlegeli*, and the White-flippered Penguin as a race of Little Penguin under the name *Eudyptula minor albosignata*. Among a limited number of records KS reported three King Penguins *Aptenodytes patagonicus* and 25 Rockhoppers *Eudyptes chrysocome* at 44°38′S 53°25′E near the Crozets on 22 Feb 73, and CF found Magellan Penguins *Spheniscus magellanicus* dispersed at sea from Mar del Plata, Argentina to the Falklands in late Nov 70, with some over a hundred miles from land. There were 20 young birds to every adult in the north, but only adults further south. We need more information about where these birds go out at sea, where penguins are very hard to locate, leave alone identify.

ALBATROSSES *DIOMEDEIDAE*

The most important recent discovery with this group has been the recognition of a new form of great albatross *Diomedea amsterdamensis* breeding in very small numbers on the upper parts of Amsterdam Island in the southern Indian Ocean (J.-P. Roux, P. Jouventin, J.-L. Mougin, J.-C. Stahl and H. Weimerskirch, *Oiseau* 53: 1-11; P. Jouventin and J.-P. Roux, RAOU Newsletter 58: 1-2). While so far it is still only known from a handful of observations, photographs and fragments so that its full character and variation remain uncertain, it apparently resembles the small dark populations of the Wandering Albatross *D. exulans* breeding in low latitudes, which nest in an immature type of plumage, but it is even more heavily marked than the darkest birds previously recognised from the Antipodes and Campbell Islands in the Pacific, with a dark cutting edge to the upper mandible like the Royal Albatross *D. epomophora*, dark patches at the tip of the bill, in the axilla and on the flanks, a white eyelid and rounded nostrils, and it nests two months later in the year. While it fits onto the end of the range of geographical variation found in the Wanderer, and indeed apparently resembles the lost type from the Cape Seas, it is clearly at the very least a very distinct race or closely allied species which deserves urgent conservation and study. It would be useful if a watch could be kept for it at sea.

It should also be noted that there are some errors in Tuck's descriptions of the Northern Pacific albatrosses, since the uniformly dark immature Short-tailed and Black-footed Albatrosses *D. albatrus* and *D. nigripes* can only be told apart by the colour of the bill, which is pale in the former and dark in the latter, while white markings are more characteristic of adult Black-footed Albatrosses; it seems possible that paler individuals described by Harrison may be hybrids with the Laysan Albatross *D. immutabilis*. JWWa reports two young Short-tailed Albatrosses at 29°16′N 162°58′E on 10 Oct 72, mentioning their pale bills. A second breeding-place for this rare species has recently been located

north of Taiwan, while individuals have begun to appear in the Hawaiian leeward islands, indicating that it must be increasing.

There are also many reports of albatrosses from the southern hemisphere. In the South Atlantic during 1973 WFC reported Wanderers as far north as 11°38′S 7°25′W on 8 Apr and A. Williamson four at 10°S 2°W on 21 Sep, while KS saw a Yellow-nosed Albatross *D. chlororhynchos* at 18°15′S 11°30′E on 1 Dec. It should perhaps be noted that both the last species and the Sooty Albatross *Phoebetria fusca* have now been found breeding on both the Prince Edward and Crozet island groups in the southern Indian Ocean. Sailing south in late Nov 70 CF only noticed young Black-browed Albatrosses *D. melanophris* until he reached the Falklands, where he saw rafts of adults six miles offshore, with more further south. PC also saw 500 five miles off Cape Pembroke in the Falklands on 12 Dec 75, and a thousand at Green Id, South Georgia, a fortnight later. PWGC saw 322 at 32°S 16°30′E in the winter quarters off South Africa on 13 Jun 74, in an area where WFC reported thousands of birds of a variety of species following trawlers at 34°49′S 17°40′W on 25 Apr 73.

PETRELS AND SHEARWATERS *PROCELLARIIDAE*

On the way to the North Pole in Oct 76 MGTH found that dozens of Northern Fulmars *Fulmarus glacialis* were still present between 70-80°N 18°W-4°E in the Arctic Ocean, with light-breasted birds predominating to 75°N, and about half the birds dark further north. In the North Pacific DHM saw two as far south at 35°30′N 178°E off California on 27 Apr 73, while KS reported 25 dark birds at 53°10′N 148°54′W on 16 Sep 73 and a hundred at 48°25′N 150°38′E eight days later. In the southern hemisphere PWGC saw two Southern Fulmars *F. glacialoides* as far north as 33°30′S 27°E off South Africa on 21 Sep 72, WFC saw three off Gough Island on 14 Apr 73 and again at 34°49′S 17°40′E eleven days later, and CF saw three in moult off Magellanes in Mar-Apr 71, with up to a thousand further south. He thought that they stayed further offshore than the Cape Pigeons *Daption capense* (which is not universal experience), and also noticed up to 800 of the latter moulting off Elephant Island during the southern summer, where he saw fewer Antarctic Petrels *Thalassoica antarctica* than reported during the *Quest* expedition, and thought that there was no possibility that they could be breeding. JWWa saw the three most northerly Cape Pigeons at 16°S 3°E on 17 Sep 74, and RIPC giant petrels *Macronectes* sp. north to 15°30′S 77°03′E on 25 Mar 76.

It should be noted that while there is a good case for uniting the Broad-billed and Salvin's (Lesser Broad-billed) Prions *Pachyptila vittata* and *P. salvini* as races of one species because they are linked by the intermediate form *macgillivrayi* recently rediscovered by B. Tollu nesting at St Paul Id, the practice of

lumping the Broad-billed and Dove Prions *P. vittata* and *P. desolata*, and the Fairy and Fulmar Prions *P. turtur* and *P. crassirostris*, into single species under the first names followed by Harrison is unacceptable because the first two forms breed alongside each other in the Crozets, and the second two in the New Zealand area, and remain distinct with no certain proof that they even hybridise. There are many records for this group; J. McManus reported 200 near Amsterdam Island on 14 Oct 72, and DS saw them everywhere near the Crozets on 22 Feb 75, and again with Blue Petrels *Halobaena coerulea* at 49°59′S 100°52′E five days later. WJT also saw 2-3000 prions heading south in groups of a hundred at 17°34′S 4°12′E in the South Atlantic on 2 July 73. CF recorded many Blue Petrels around Diego Ramirez and Snow Island off southernmost South America, where they are now known to breed (and also in South Georgia, but *not* the Falklands), on the way to the Antarctic in late 1970, and found that they outnumbered the more highly migratory prions when he returned in Mar-Apr 71. Tuck's otherwise useful picture of prions' bills shows that of the Thin-billed Prion *P. belcheri* too broad.

There also still seems to be a good deal of confusion over the very names, leave alone the appearance, range and affinities, of the large group of gadfly petrels belonging to the genus *Pterodroma*. In recent years there have been a growing number of reports of birds resembling Atlantic (Schlegel's) Petrels *P. incerta* far south in summer, and CF recorded them south to 58°S 57°W on 3 Dec 70, and PKK between 60°29′S 63°44′W and 59°12′S 70°24′W in the Drake Strait between 7-19 Mar 70. Reports that they occur far to the east appear to have been exaggerated, but JJ describes one dark brown petrel with a white belly seen with 50 White-headed Petrels *P. lessonii* and 20 Great-winged Petrels *P. macroptera* at 33°S 132°E in the Great Australian Bight on 27 Jul 71 which may be the first for Australian waters. It should be noted that the Magenta Petrel *P. magentae* which is omitted by Tuck and doubtfully identified as an ally of the tropical Phoenix Petrel *P. alba* by Harrison actually appears to be a rather distinct South Pacific representative of the Atlantic Petrel with a paler chin which nests in the summer in the Chatham Islands, where 23 have now been caught by teams organised by David Crockett.

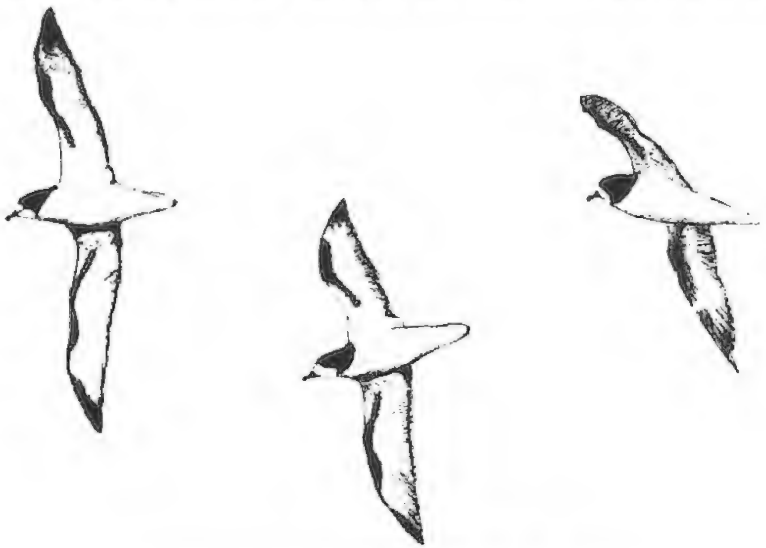
A second confusing group of petrels about which more information is now becoming available appear to be related to the large, heavily-built central Pacific Tahiti Petrel *P. rostrata*, reported at 27°10′S 160°41′E and 23°02′S 168°23′E on 1 and 27 Jul 74 by MKB. Two birds collected off the Solomons in the 1920s have long been considered a small form of this species, Beck's Petrel *P. becki*, and Christian Jouanin has suggested that the Mascarene Petrel *P. aterrima*, recently rediscovered after a century on Reunion, which is extremely similar in size, may also be a melanistic member of the same group, while Storrs Olson has also reported bones of a very similar bird, *P. rupinarum*, on St Helena. First reports by

Dick Watling of his rediscovery of the Fiji Petrel *P. macgillivray* at the type locality, Gau Island, also suggest that it may be an even smaller melanistic member of the same group, which may be distinguished from members of the genus *Bulweria*, with which they have often been confused, notably by Tuck, by their thicker bills and shorter tails.

There has also been some confusion over the medium-sized petrels of cooler waters related to the Soft-plumaged Petrel *P. mollis*. It has long been known that this species is polymorphic in the southern hemisphere, some being grey above and white below with a dark band across the breast, and others with much dark above, or exceptionally entirely dark, and it has recently been suggested that these are different races breeding in the South Atlantic and Indian Ocean, which appears unacceptable because they interbreed in varying proportions at all the sites which have been property investigated. It appears on the other hand that two other closely-related forms with white breasts of different sizes which have long been regarded as North Atlantic races of *P. mollis*, the large Gon-gon *P. feae* and small Freira *P. madeira*, should be regarded as distinct species because they both occur without interbreeding at Madeira, together with the Kerguelen Petrel *P. brevirostris*, once thought likely to hybridise with *P. mollis*, but now also known to occur at a number of the same sites in the Southern Ocean without interbreeding (*Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 103: 52-58).

We have a number of records shedding light on the distribution of allied intermediate-sized gadly petrels. PKK reported examples of the North Atlantic representatives of *P. mollis* at 18°45′N 25°30′W and 32°30′N 17°10′W on 25 and 28 Jul 72, and WFC southern birds in the South Atlantic north to 11°38′S 7°25′W on 8 Apr 73 and 11°14′S 3°33′W on 5 Sep 74. JWWa saw three at 16°S 3°E on 17 Sep 74, and five birds in the comparable part of the Indian Ocean between 16°32′S 94°58′E and 18°S 87°E on 1-2 Sep 74. PC saw them south to 59°S 51°W on 17 Jan 76, although Kerguelen Petrels *P. brevirostris* appear commoner there, with eight as far south as 62°S 37°27′W on 22 Feb and one at 61°49′S 50°54′W on 7 Mar. MKB reported four petrels with dark upperparts, a pale face, belly and echelon under the wing, and an incomplete breast band at 21°27′S 174°52′E on 25 Jun 74, and a bird which was darker underneath at 24°54′S 168°48′E on 27 Jul, which may have been the Herald Petrel *P. arminjoniana* (this seems a better vernacular name than Trindade Petrel which has been used for the Atlantic race, treated as a separate species by Tuck, since it is so often spelt incorrectly). There are also a number of records of the Mottled (or Peale's) Petrel *P. inexpectata* from its winter quarters in the North Pacific, where DHM reports 70 to 34°N 172°E on 26 Apr 73, an astonishing 2000 at 35°30′N 178°E the next day, and 90 at 38°30′N 167°W the day after, and KS three at 50°-53°N 158°-166°E on 22 Sep 73 and again at 53°23′N 144°26′W on 6 Jul 74.

There are a number of records of allies of the large West Indian Capped Petrel *P. hasitata*. MKB saw three possible examples of this species at 17°40′N 69°30′W south of Hispaniola on 4 Jul 75, and KS another of its ally, the Bermuda Petrel *P. cahow*, at 30°29′N 66°06′W on 6 Jun 77, remarking on its largely white head. JWWa saw thirty of the North Pacific representative, the Hawaiian (or Dark-rumped) Petrel *P. phaeopygia* at 21°16′N 160°42′W on 25 Jul 74, three at 24°30′N three days later, and ten at 13°45′N 118°W on 25 Sep 75. MKB reports the presence of four "Collared Petrels" with conspicuous white collars over an area of orange water at 16°42′S 170°30′E on 10 Apr 74 which he identified as *P. brevipes* although the description appears to better fit the southwest Pacific representative of the *hasitata* group the White-necked Petrel *P. externa*, which has also been collected in that area.



Pterodroma leucoptera drawn by K. Meeth

There are also a number of records of the smaller allied group of "Cookilaris" from the Pacific. In the northwest DHM reported seven possible Stejneger's Petrels *P. longirostris* at 34°N 172°E on 26 Apr 73, and three at 42°N 154°W four days later; JWWa also saw two at 25°14′N 137°53′E on 23 May 73. He also reports a possible Bonin Petrel *P. hypoleuca* at 24°30′N 174°30′W on 24 Jul 74, and two possible Cook's Petrel *P. cookii* at 12°27′N 114°50′W on 16 Jul 74, with three more at 11°45′N 108°W on 23 Sep 75. RIPC reported 34 of the last species (or possibly the local form

Defilippe's Petrel *P. defilippiana* which is probably best treated as a distinct species?) at 28°21'S 75°30'W on 22 Mar 76, and smaller numbers daily to 15°30'S 77°30'W on 25 Mar, with single Gould's Petrels *P. leucoptera* (now known to migrate to this area) on the last two days. MKB also saw two of the last in the southeast Pacific at 21°05'S 173°48'E on 30 Sep 73, and other possible records off New Caledonia are quoted above under *P. externa*. It should be noted that Tuck is mistaken in saying that the last two groups of petrels have short tails.

There are also a number of records of Bulwer's Petrel *Bulweria bulwerii*, which does not in my experience often show a pale wing-bar as reported by Harrison. In the Atlantic PWGC saw one in the summer quarters at 33°08'N 13°44'W on 7 Jun 73, and DS another further west at 37°08'N 25°24'W on 12 Jun 77, KS saw one at 37°18'N 17°08'W on 7 Jul 73 and at 37°36'N 24°32'W next day, and RMC saw one at 34°20'N 12°40'W on 9 Sep 74. Further south in their winter quarters WFC saw six at 19°41'N 18°32'W on 28 Nov 74, and PKK up to ten daily from 3°30'N 29°45'W to 4°S 33°W on 20-22 Dec 69, and from 6°S 33°45'W to 28°N 20°W on 19-27 Apr 72, with 140 at 32°N 17°W near the breeding place on the Salvages. In the North Pacific JWWe saw occasional birds off the coast of China at 23°77'N 118°30'E on 17 May 77, a few at 28°05'N 122°57'E next day, and many at 24°36'N 119°23'E on 23 May, ASY saw ten at 21°07'N 151°06'E on 20 Jun 77 and again at 20°50'N 144°55'E next day, JOW saw one at 21°16'N 160°42'E on 22 Jul 74, and RMC saw four at 28°05'N 161°13'E on 27 Aug 74. In their winter quarters in the Indian Ocean PWGC saw possible birds at 17°03'S 97°15'E on 19 Oct 72 and 7°11'N 76°17'E on 20 Aug 73, and an example of its larger local representative Jouanin's Petrel *B. fallax* at 11°43'N 55°24'E on 22 Mar 74, while WFC saw the latter as far south as 7°59'S 64°24'E on 4 Oct 74.

Many White-chinned Petrels *Procellaria aequinoctialis* were seen off South Africa, with a maximum of 800 reported by WFC feeding around trawlers at 34°49'S 17°40'E on 25 Apr 73, and the five most northerly birds reported by KS at 18°15'S 11°30'E on 1 Dec 73. It should be noted that Tuck is incorrect in suggesting that the larger sedentary New Zealand representative of this species, the Westland Petrel *P. westlandica*, disperses mainly west to Australia, since many fly east through the Cook Strait to feed off the east side of the South Island. JWWa reports one of the smaller, migratory form, Parkinson's Petrel *P. parkinsoni*, from its winter quarters at 8°30'S 92°W off central America on 20 Sep 75.

There are numerous records of Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea* from much of its range, and it would be interesting to see the large number that have now been collected by R.N.B.W.S. mapped. Many were recorded in the northern summer off the breeding sites, notably by RWJ in Jun-Sep 75 and 76 at 37°29'N 6°21'E, 37°17'N 10°06'E, 37°05'N 11°03'E and 36°46'N 11°41'E in the Mediterranean off the North African coast. The most

northerly report of large numbers involves over 200 seen by DHM at 48°40′N 11°20′W off Brittany on 23 Sep 76, and the most westerly may be ca 250 "fulmars" seen over a fish shoal from H.M.S. *Protector* at 37°55′N 33°10′W off the Azores on 21 Oct 73. Further south towards the winter quarters, PWGC saw 620 at 28°N 15°18′W on 31 Oct 73, WFC 140 at 13°29′N 17°40′W on 30 Aug 74, GHP 20 at 4°30′N 6°W on 15 Nov 73, AJP 300 at 10°09′N 16°44′W on 9 Dec 74, JWWe vast numbers at 13°04′N 17°20′W on 6 Feb 76, WFC 250 at 21°N 17°26′W on 26 Apr 73, and PKK six at 18°45′N 25°30′W on 25 Apr 72. In the winter quarters in the South Atlantic RSH saw 300 at 25 miles south of Cape Agulhas on 12 Dec 74, noticing white patches on the wing coverts presumably due to moult (seldom recorded in this species). PWGC saw them repreatedly between 27°S 11°E and 35°S 20°E off South Africa in Dec 74-Jan 75, with 1240 at 29°49′S 14°26′E on 1 Jan and also 187 at 31°07′S 15°23′E on 9 Mar 74, WFC saw 250 at 34°27′S 25°13′E on 26 Apr 73, and PKK saw 33 at 30°30′S 48°45′W off southern Brasil on 30 Dec 69.

There are nearly as many records of the Pacific representative of Cory's Shearwater, the Streaked (or White-faced) Shearwater *C. leucomelas*. Sailing west in May 73 DHM first saw 15 at 42°N 172°E on the 26th, then *ca* 2500 at 36°N 161°E two days later, 3000 at 35°N 148°E two days after that, and 6000 at 35°N 141°E next day. PWGC also saw thousands outside Tokyo Bay in late Apr 74, with 1000 at 35°52′N 141°19′E on the 26th. Further west off the coast of China JWWe saw the first two at 23°N 118°30′E on 17 May 77, and many at 28°N 123°E and 32°N 127°E over the next two days and at 24°36′N 119°23′E on the 22nd. Further south towards the winter quarters DHM saw 250 at 7°08′N 130°08′E on 17 Apr 73, ten at 23°N 144°E on the 21st and one at 27°N 148°E next day. PWGC saw *ca* 100 large, white-breasted shearwaters which were presumably this species at 3°53′N 99°51′E in the Malacca Strait on 8 Dec 73, and another 200 at 17°28′N 118°42′E in the South China Sea on 16 Apr 74. KS saw 30 at 9°30′S 135°14′E in the Arafura Sea on 29 Oct 73 and another 50 nearby at 10°53′S 136°52′E on 2 Nov; although there were odd records it has only recently been accepted that it reaches Australia.

PWGC reported 51 Wedge-tailed Shearwaters *Puffinus pacificus* at 7°33′N 75°32′E off Cape Comorin on 27 Jul 73, and JWWe a group there on 5 Jun 77. The latter saw a few at 12°55′N 111°39′E in the South China Sea on 14 May 77, again at 18°29′N 113°36′E on 13 Jul, and west of Kondo Id in the Malacca Strait on the 19th, with increasing numbers at 5°38′N 113°03′E to 10°27′N 110°48′E on 27-28 Jul. South of the East Indies JWWa saw eight at 15°32′S 119°12′E on 24 Dec 72 and ten at 20°02′S 112°09′E on the 28th, KS three at 14°26′S 115°45′E on 6 Nov 73 and two at 15°45′S 110°48′E next day, and JWWa saw one at 16°32′S 94°58′E on 1 Sep 74. JJ describes a bird seen at 37°39′S 139°55′E off Adelaide, South Australia, on 31 Aug 71, where he alse saw small numbers at

33°46'S 125°48'E on 4 Oct. In the Pacific D. St. J. Court-Smith sends a description of ten petrels with pale faces and underparts seen off Wake Island on 30 May 76 with another six on the 30th which seem most likely to be the pale phase of the Wedge-tailed Shearwater, and it seems possible that this may also apply to birds identified by JWWa as Grey-backed Shearwaters *P. bulleri* at 11°N 104°W - 13°N 121°W off central America on 14-17 Jul 74 since pale wedgetails are known to winter in that area.

Thirty Great Shearwaters *P. gravis* were first reported on their northward migration by KS at 37°38'N 24°W off the Azores on 4 Apr 73. AvanG next saw 337 heading north between 36°N 29°W and 21°N 61°W on 16-21 May 76, and R. Shore a group heading NNW at 36°N 61°W on 24 May 75. After they moved into the eastern North Atlantic later in the summer ASY reported them very numerous at about 48°N 6°W, 26 miles west of Creche Point on 16 Aug 77, RWJ saw 200 at 37°45'N 13°W on 24 Aug 73, and JWWa saw 100 at 48°55'W 10°40'W on 25 Oct 76. Further south AJP saw 133 still flying north off west Africa at 14°50'N 17°37'W on 17 Jun 76, but DJ regularly saw them flying south between 8°-20°N 19°-23°W between 18-30 Aug 74, with 1000 at 8°N 21°W on the 19th, and occasional birds to 24 Sep. ASY also saw numbers between 13°42'N 23°W on 31 Aug 76 and 22°16'S 40°52'W on 7 Sep, GHP reported 200 at 4°30'N 6°W on 15 Nov 73, PKK saw them between 20°N 24°W - 8°N 29°W during 16-19 Dec 69, and 34 heading south at 8°S 34°W on 23 Dec, and JWWa saw two at 7°39'S 34°18'W on 19 Dec 73. In the South Atlantic KS reported two at 18°15'S 11°30'E off Namibia on 1 Dec 73, ASY many at 43°19'S 63°06'W off Argentina on 1 Jan 76, and PKK 39 at 30°30'S 48°45'W on 30 Dec 69, one at 54°49'S 64°57'W on 8 Mar 72, and up to 25 around the Falklands on 25-29 Mar 72.

Two parties of Flesh- (or Pale-) footed Shearwaters *P. carneipes* were reported by JJ at 33°46'S 125°48'E off South Australia on 4 Oct 77, and one at 35°S 135°E five days later. In their winter quarters in the Indian Ocean WFC saw three or four birds daily at 7°56'S 54°40'E, 7°59'S 59°44'E and 6°28'S 72°58'E on 2, 3 and 7 Oct 74, WW many off Cape Guardafui, Somalia on 25 Oct 75, JWWa 22 at 1°25'N 88°26'E on 6 May 73 and seven at 13°15'S 112°E on 29 Aug 74, WW saw a few in the northern Malacca Strait on 10 May and 1 Jun 77 and groups in a new area also containing Wedge-tailed Shearwaters, off the coast of Korea at around 12°30'N 111°E on 10 and 14 Jul 77. In the North Pacific DHM saw up to 380 birds daily between 73°N 144°E and 30°N 160°E on 21-24 Apr 73. RIPC reported thirty of the pale-breasted east Pacific representative of the last species, the Pink-Footed Shearwater *P. (c.) creatopus*, at 42°-38°S 74°W on 19-20 Mar 76 and one at 15°30'S 77°W five days later, DHM up to 350 daily at 7°N 82°W to 13°N 93°W on 4-8 Feb 73, and KS four at 12°N 93°W on 30 Mar 74 and another at 17°N 104°W on 1 Apr, though in view of the date it seems possible that in the last two cases there

could have been some confusion with other pale-breasted northern shearwaters wintering in that area.

Among many records of Sooty Shearwaters *P. griseus* Captain G. Howe of R.R.S. *Discovery* reported several with Gannets *Sula bassana* in the NE Atlantic at 48°15'N 9°23'W on 8 Oct 74, PKK individuals crossing the equator at 4°S 33°W on 22 Dec 69 and at 6°S 34°W on 19 Sep 72, and DJ another at 8°N 21°W on 21 Aug 74. PWGC reported hundreds off South Africa in Nov and Dec 74 and 75, and WW thousands in Feb 76. CF saw up to 35 off Argentina in late 70, and some which appeared to be moulting primaries off Magellanes the following April. DHM recorded 7500 at 35°30'N 178°E in the North Pacific on 27 Apr 73, with diminishing numbers to 42°N 154°W on 1 May, and again from 42°N 172°E on 26 May rising to several thousand daily between 36°N 161°E - 34°N 137°E at the end of May, with fifty at 41°29 N 161°W on 17 Jun. JJ reported 1500 Short-tailed Shearwaters *P. tenuirostris* over dolphins at 35°S 135°E off South Australia on 9 Oct 71, KS 150 at 21°17'S 154°03'E in the Tasman Sea on 31 Oct 75, DHM many with the Sooty Shearwaters at 35°30'N 178°E on 27 Apr 74, and KS "millions" at 54°47'N 166°50'W in Unimak Pass between Alaska and the Aleutians on 18 Sep 73, and thousands at 54°20'N 164°59'W nearby on 8 Jul 74.

There are also many records of Manx Shearwaters *P. puffinus* from west European seas, and KS also saw one in the western North Atlantic at 38°42'N 64°09'W on 23 Jul 76. ASY reported one on the migration south at 36°15'N 12°56'W on 29 Aug 76, ten at 19°28'N 20°22'W next day, and possibly several more at 1°28'S 29°36'W on 3 Sep. PWGC saw two at 32°S 16°E in the minor winter quarters off SW Africa on 19 Nov 75, CF up to ten in the main winter quarters off Mar del Plata, Argentina in late Nov 70, and PKK two at 30°30'S 48°45'W on 30 Dec 69 and at least eight on the return journey at 32°N 17°W on 28 Apr 70. WW recorded five of the Balearic race *P. p. mauretanicus* east of Algiers on 14 Jul 74, and RWJ twenty which presumably belonged to the east Mediterranean race *P. p. yelkouan* in the Gulf of Asinara, N. Sardinia, on 28 Jun 76. It should be noted that among shearwaters of this group occurring elsewhere it has also recently been found that Hutton's Shearwater *P. huttoni* of New Zealand appears to winter off Northwest Australia, and postulated that it might make an anticlockwise movement right round that continent, though this remains to be proved.

There are a number of records of the rather poorly developed Persian race of Audubon's Shearwater *P. lherminieri* from the vicinity of the Arabian Sea, where M. D. Gallagher has recently found that it breeds in the summer in the cliffs of the Kuria Muria Islands, and WW saw many off northern Somalia on 25 Oct 75 and off the Hanish Is in the approaches to the Red Sea on 15 Dec. PWGC saw a small shearwater at 8°38'S 45°16'E off East Africa

on 9 Nov 75, and WFC another at 17°34'S 38°29'E on 17 Oct 74, and 14 ten miles south of Egmont Id in the Chagos group on 10 Oct. MDB also saw sixty at 4°30'N 72°45'E off the Maldives on 24 Feb 74, a bird off Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, on 5 Sep, and twenty at 24°50'S 168°04'E off New Caledonia on 27 Jun. Captain I. R. Atkinson reports five at 9°15'S 133°W near the Marquesas on 13 Jul 73. It should be noted that a melanistic derivative of this species, Heinroth's Shearwater *P. heinrothi*, which had not been reported for half a century, has recently been found again by Don Hadden on Bougaineville Id north of New Guinea, where it probably breeds in the hills.

There are also a number of records of the closely-related Little Shearwater *P. assimilis* from the vicinity of Tristan and Gough Island in the South Atlantic, where WFC in particular saw thousands on 14 Apr 73, and he also saw nine at 28°05'N 16°13'W off west Africa on 27 Aug 74, where PKK also saw birds at 27°N 18°W on 14 Dec 69, at 18°45'N 25°30'W on 25 Apr 72 and 32°N 17°W three days later. It should be noted that M. J. Imber has recently found that on the sub-antarctic islands, where this species appears to be rather common all round the world, it normally nests in the summer rather than in the winter as it does further north.

Ed. Part II of this analysis will appear in the next volume of *Sea Swallow*.

AUTUMN MIGRATION OF LANDBIRDS IN BOMBAY OFFSHORE WATERS IN 1983

By Captain D. M. Simpson, M.N.

The following species were recorded whilst serving as Marine Advisor to the Indian offshore vessel *Malaviya One* in the Gulf of Khambay, close offshore Bombay, and in Bombay High Oilfield during the period September-14 November 1983. Mr Paul Taylor, Chief Engineer, assisted in recording these observations. Species which could not be positively identified are indicated by the notation (U).

Reference points commonly used are:

Oil drilling-rig *Bonito I* (Bombay High Oilfield) - 19°37'N 71°23'E (90'WNW Bombay, 70'SSE Diu Head).

Drillship *Gettysburg* - 21°05'N 72°24'E (13.5'W Suvoli Pt.).

Weather

In September the weather was very variable with wind generally from the west, Force 2 to Force 6. Few concentrated flocks were seen in direct flight by day so most birds were presumably stragglers from overhead night migration. Throughout October the weather was fine and clear with generally light winds. During the last four days in the Gulf of Khambay, winds were generally fresh from NNE with visibility reduced by haze to about 8 miles. Fine and clear weather continued throughout the first two weeks in November, though a little hazy in the Gulf of Khambay and off the coast of Kutch.

Landbirds observed

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*. Singles on 27 Sep (*Bonito I*) and 13 Oct.

Indian Pond Heron *Ardeola grayii*. Several small flocks around drillship *Gettysburg*, some landing on board, suggesting a strong passage movement across the Gulf of Khambay (37 miles wide at this point), 28 Oct (15), 30 Oct (12), 2 Nov (2). One on 11 Nov off coast of Kutch 23°23′N 68°00′E.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*. 29 Oct flock of 5 flying SE crossing Gulf of Khambay.

Watercock *Gallicrex cinerea*. One female landed on board late pm 16 Oct and remained until after dark.

Eurasian Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*. One circling ship 4 Oct. One female stationed on drilling tower of *Gettysburg* and sallying out to hunt.

Hobby *Falco subbueto*. One female (or juv) briefly am 2 Oct. One observed again at dusk possibly same bird.

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix* (U). One seen briefly, probably this species, circled and landed on board.

Houbara Bustard *Chlamydotis undulata*. One fine specimen circled rig early am 5 Nov for 10 mins and departed SE.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*. One on board 2 Oct. Photographed.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*. One probable on board briefly on 15 Sep. One on board throughout 6 Nov off coast of Kutch. Photographed.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta* (U). 19 Sep (1), 26 Sep (1), 2 Oct (1), 3 Oct (1). Photographed. 4 Oct (1). Thought to be *C. minuta*, but if not can only have been *C. subminuta*.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*. One arrived am 15 Sep and stayed until after dark. Winter plumage - photographed.

Blue Rock Dove *Columbia livia* (U). Three briefly on 29 Oct.

Laughing/Palm Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*. 20 Sep (2), 23 Sep (1), 27 Sep (2).

Red Turtle Dove *Streptopelia tranquabarica*. 28 Sep (2), photographed. 28 Oct (3), 29 Oct (6), 30 Oct (5), 1 Nov (1). Clearly a considerable passage of this species.

Koel *Eudynamys scolopacea*. One female on board half hour on 28 Oct. One female off Kutch (12°23′N 68°06′E) on 8 Nov.

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *Merops superciliosus* (U). Two large greenish bee-eaters seen in flight (29 Oct) but lacked long central tail feathers so thought to be immatures.

Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis*. 2 Nov (1) and 8 Nov (1) off coast of Kutch. Stationed on top of oil rig legs (300 ft), and caught several large insects (locusts?).

European Roller *Coracias garrulus*. Singles on 26 and 27 Sep feeding on flying insects, butterflies and moths.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*. One on board briefly on 6 Oct.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*. Singles on board 29 Sep, 4 Oct and 28 Oct. These were the only records during the period, whereas in SE Asia in offshore waters this was the most common migrant seen almost daily during July-November.

Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla*. Singles on 26 Sep and 29 Sep (found asleep at night and photographed), 6 Oct (2), 13 Oct (1), 16 Oct (3). About 50 on board in small group during period 18-31 Oct. At least 50 recorded en route Gulf of Khambay to Kutch during period 1-8 Nov, but none thereafter (9-13 Nov) so probably end of passage.

Eastern Calandra Lark/Bimaculated Lark *Melanocorypha bimaculata*. 7 Nov (1), 8 Nov (2), 9 Nov (1) - photographed. Off coast of Kutch (23°23′N 68°06′E).

Rufous-tailed Finch-lark *Ammomanes phoenicurus*. One of this very distinctive species was on board for an hour on 31 Oct in position 20°37′N 72°10′E (32′ nearest land).

Ashy-crowned Finch-lark *Eremopterix grisea*. Two males on 1 Nov. Unmistakable. Photographed. It was surprising to see this endemic Indian resident 16 miles from nearest land.

Black Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis*. A number on board *Gettysburg* feasting on the many large dragonflies and grasshoppers/locusts. Photographed. 28 Oct (6), 29 Oct (10). Two on 2 Nov, Gulf of Khambay, and one on 7 Nov off coast of Kutch.

Indian House Crow *Corvus splendens*. Two on a drilling rig on 5 Sep and still there on 14 Oct. They were probably not genuine

migrants but hitchhikers from the mainland by boat. One of the rig personnel said they had both been there for at least two months.

Rose-coloured Starling *Sturnus roseus*. Mostly immatures, on 29 Oct (6), 30 Oct (2), 31 Oct (2). Photographed. Three young birds stayed on board the tugs/tow all the way from Gulf of Khambay to Kutch (2-6 Nov) - surely in the wrong direction? One on 11 Nov.

Brahminy Mynah *Sturnus pagodarum*. Juveniles on 29 Oct (2) and 1 Nov (1). Photographed.

Warblers. Identification of this group of very similar species occurring on the Indian sub-continent, and the lack of good colour plates in the available literature (King *et al*, 1985; Woodcock & Martin, 1980) caused endless problems. The following could not therefore be positively identified:

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia* (U). One on board 31 Oct. Heavily streaked crown and mantle and distinctive rounded tail which it flicked like a chat or wagtail.

Blythe's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum* (U). 28 Oct (1), 29 Oct (1-2), 31 Oct (1), 2 Nov (1), 4 Nov (1).

Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola* (U). Singles on 26 Sep, 28 Oct, 29 Oct, 31 Oct and 1 Nov. Red-brown on upper tail coverts.

Booted Warbler *Hippolais caligata*. Several almost certainly this species 28-31 Oct. One positively identified (white edges to tail) on 1 Nov.

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides* (U). Looked like greener version of Arctic Warbler *P. borealis*. Very active catching flies. Singles on 15 Sep, 19 Sep, 23 Sep, 29 Oct, 1 Nov and 7 Nov (off Kutch).

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* (U). 31 Oct (2), 2 Nov (1). Very small and active.

Tickell's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus affinis* (U). One on 29 Oct. Thick yellow eyebrow, black eye-stripe, bright yellow underparts.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*. One on 1 Nov showing blackish ear-coverts. Two on 3 Nov, one with greyer ear-coverts so possibly Desert Lesser Whitethroat *S. curruca minuta*.

Desert Warbler *Sylvia nana*. One on board off coast of Kutch on 8 Nov. Very active and distinctive small warbler well known to DMS from his time in Persian Gulf.

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecia*. One female (or possible male in winter plumage) on board off coast of Kutch on 8 and 9 Nov.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*. One female on board off coast of Gujarat on 3 Nov.

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*. Eight singles (2M, remainder F or juv) during period 15-29 Sep, 29 Oct (1F and 1 poss juv), 1 Nov (2 juv).

Pied Bush-chat *Saxicola caprata*. A fine male arrived 1100 on 6 Oct and stayed well after dark (posn. 10°17′N 71°26′E). Very tame, and excellent photographs taken. On 30 Oct a male seen in flight and a female briefly on board.

Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius*. One female on board drillship throughout 23 Sep.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*. 15 singles on board period 4-12 nov.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*. Singles seen almost daily period 13-30 Sep (total 18). Throughout October the most frequent and numerous visitor with at least 80 during period 27-31 Oct. 1-9 Nov (80). None seen after 10 Nov.

Eurasian Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*. 13 Sep one on oil-rig *W. T. Adams* (18°17′N 72°23′E). Photographed. Singles 23 Sep, 2 Oct and 3 Oct. On 29 Oct and 31 Oct singles sighted may have been Indian Tree Pipit *A. hodgsoni*. One on 1 Nov.

Brown Rock Pipit/Long-billed Pipit *Anthus similis*. One on 26 Sep 1700 until nightfall catching moths, etc., on deck. 28 Oct (1).

Rufous-backed Shrike *Lanius schack*,
Bombay High Oilfield, September 1983
Photo: Captain D. M. Simpson, M.N.

Rufous-backed/Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schack*. 14 Sep (1), 19 Sep (1), 26 Sep (2) (photographed), 7 Oct (1 prob), 29 Oct (1) all day catching dragonflies and large insects.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*. One on board off coast of Kutch 6 Nov.

Yellow-throated Sparrow *Petronia xanthocollis*. Single male on board 31 Oct. Yellow throat patch, chestnut shoulder patch and white wingbars diagnostic. Five arrived on board 1 Nov, four remained on 2 Nov and two remained throughout passage Gulf of Khambay to close off coast of Kutch (3-7 Nov).

Grey-necked Bunting *Emberiza buchanini*. One am 28 Oct Gulf of Khambay. Brick-red breast and belly. Grey head, white outer tail feathers.

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Captain D. M. Simpson, M.N., 20 Heather Drive, Eskdale Park, Whitby, North Yorkshire.

OBSERVATIONS OF BIRDS OF THE SOUTH SANDWICH GROUP

By Lieutenant-Commander M. K. Barritt, R.N.

H.M. Surveying Ship *Hecate*, the Ice Patrol Ship on station, visited Southern Thule in the South Sandwich Group on 19 December 1982. Subsequently the island group was traversed and Vindication, Candlemas and Leskov Islands were closed during daylight hours on 20 December. Aerial reconnaissance and photography of penguin colonies were conducted at Candlemas Island.

Habitat

Two centuries before the island group came to political prominence its discoverer, Captain James Cook, described it as 'the most horrible coast in the World . . . which . . . would (answer) no end whatever, or (be) of the least use either to Navigation or Geography or indeed any other science'. The ornithologist at least will demur.

The islands are the volcanic summits of one component of the Scotia Arc, the chain of ranges including Tierra del Fuego and the Antarctic Peninsula which encompasses the Scotia Sea. Leskov Island, described by the British Antarctic Survey as 'essentially

unvisited', is a sheer-sided volcanic plug. Several of the larger islands, including Candlemas, have active craters. Their plumes of smoke are usually concealed by palls of cloud. The greater part of the surface of the islands is layered with compacted snow. The small areas of clear ground at sea-level are formed of cinders and compacted volcanic ash. This was the composition of Hewison Point, the spit projecting southeast from Southern Thule upon which the illegal Argentine base was constructed. The only vegetation is a vivid green growth which is fertilised by the penguins. The windward shores of the islands are clogged with drift ice.

Observations

Instructions were obtained from the British Antarctic Survey on the localities which most needed investigation and the type of observation required. The final achievements appeared slight, but any new knowledge of this remote area is better than none, and careful if untutored observations can be of substantial value.

a. SOUTHERN THULE. The predominant species are Adelie Penguin *Pygoscelis adeliae* and Chinstrap Penguin *Pygoscelis antarctica*. They were observed in separate and mixed groups from the tip of Hewison Point up to the 200 foot contour on the snow slopes to the west. Accurate numerical estimates were not possible in the time available but many thousands of both species were present. At 200 feet above sea-level the penguins were nesting in scrapes in an exposed ridge of decaying rock which stood proud of the snow-cap of the island. In groups in which the species were mixed, the Chinstraps were always on the perimeter. The Adelies had laid eggs and down on the peninsula some chicks had hatched. The Chinstraps had eggs. There were small numbers of Gentoo Penguin *Pygoscelis papua* on the peninsula. None were observed with eggs.

Numerous parasitical Southern Black-backed Gulls *Larus dominicanus* and Antarctic Skuas *Catharacta antarctica*. Snow Petrels *Pagadroma nivea* were present around the upper snow slopes and sea cliffs. Pintado Petrels *Daption capense* and Giant Petrels *Macronectes* sp. were observed around the shores, and Wilson's Storm-petrels *Oceanites oceanicus* flew around the outlets of the ship which was anchored close north of Hewison Point.

b. CANDLEMAS AND VINDICATION ISLANDS. The only penguins observed in the water around the ship whilst passing these islands were numerous Chinstraps. No landings were made on the islands.

An aerial reconnaissance of the penguin colonies of Candlemas Island was conducted by Wasp helicopter, first at 4-500 feet and then at 800 feet. At this height the aircrew observed that there were still some penguins higher than themselves on the snow slopes. Low cloud shrouded the peaks of the island and rendered flying hazardous. No birds were seen in the vicinity of Mount Lucifer, an

active volcano which was extruding sulphurous vapour. Off the east coast they were gathering on bergs and floes. Giant petrels were the only other species observed over the island. Notes of the precise localities of the colonies and photography showing their extent were gathered for B.A.S. The aircrew identified the species in the photographs as Chinstrap Penguins with small numbers of Adelie Penguins. The birds were nesting and some had eggs.

Aerial photography of bird colonies for population census has been developed by B.A.S. scientists and H.M.S. *Endeavour* helicopter flights over successive seasons. The most successful sorties are those which provide a scale indication in the photography. Interested Ships' Flights may obtain information from:

> The British Antarctic Survey, High Cross, Madingley Road, Cambridge CB3 0ET.

c. LESKOV ISLAND. Course was shaped to pass up the east side of the island and then close along its northern coast. All faces of this sheer rock were observed during the passage. Many Snow Petrels were seen flying around and perched on the rock faces. A group of about 35 penguins, probably Chinstraps, were seen at the very base of the cliffs at the northwest corner of the island at the High Water mark. No other birds were seen.

Conclusion

Many thousands of Adelie and Chinstrap Penguins were found nesting in Southern Thule. Other Antarctic seabirds were present. From an aerial reconnaissance by helicopter both these penguins were present and nesting on Candlemas Island. Much useful ornithological data remains to be gathered by vessels patrolling the Falklands Island Dependencies. Valuable advice on which areas are particularly little known may be obtained from the British Antarctic Survey.

Lieutenant-Commander M. K. Barritt, Royal Navy, H.M.S. *Echo*, B.F.P.O. Ships.

It is interesting to compare Lt.-Cdr. Barritt's observations with those of Capt. J. Wilkinson in a visit to this island group with H.M.S. *Proctector* in mid-March and again in December 1956, see *Sea Swallow* 9: 18-20 and 10:22. Wilkinson's observations are more detailed, but he did not record the presence of Adelie Penguins in March in the Southern Thule Group, and although he landed on Vindication Island he identified no penguins ashore here in this month. Groups of Chinstraps however were observed in the water. — Editor.

MIGRANTS IN THE WESTERN ATLANTIC — SPRING 1982

By Captain P. W. G. Chilman, M.N.

The following observations were made whilst on passage from Europe to the Mississippi and return to Rotterdam in M.V. *Tricula* (127,872 dwt. tonnes) during the 1982 spring migration. The landbird species seen make an interesting comparison with the autumn migrants noted in the western Atlantic in autumn 1978 (*Sea Swallow* 30: 39-44).

Sailing from Antwerp on 8 April for New Orleans the passage through the Channel and Western Approaches was generally uneventful. Several flocks of small landbirds were seen heading across the Channel next day, but were not specifically identified. A Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* landed on the bridge wing, and I was able to observe it for several minutes. About a week later a dead Chiffchaff was found on deck which was possibly this one.

On the afternoon of 10 April when 248 miles west of Ushant, an adult Swallow *Hirundo rustica* was seen flying round the ship for a few minutes.

Cory's Shearwaters *Calonectris diomedea* were seen on 13, 14 and 15 April between 39°55′N 31°30′W and 35°00′N 48′W, all singles or pairs except one flock of about 40 over a school of dolphins on 15th. I think I can tell them from Great Shearwaters *Puffinus gravis* at a good distance but never identify them positively unless I can see the yellow bill and shaded head of the Cory's or black cap of the Greater. I find that the white V on the rump of the Greater is quite useless for identification because a great many Cory's have just as much white there, although I have seen whole flocks of Cory's with no white on the rump.

Before breakfast on 19 April I received a call from the engine-room to say that the Fourth Engineer had been attacked by a bird in the top of the boiler room and would I please do something about it. I went down and found that the culprit was an American Purple Gallinule *Porphyrula martinica* which I managed to catch quite easily as it was hiding in a dark corner. A beautiful bird, like a coot, bright deep blue head, neck and underbody and glossy green back and wings. It was most unfriendly and bit and scratched with its long claws so I rapidly gave up any idea of trying to measure it. The door into the top of the boiler room had only been open for a few minutes, so it must have just gone in off the poop and certainly was not on board the day before. The ship's position was 27°25′N 72°15′W, nearest land San Salvador Island 234 miles SW, and the weather was sunny and cloudless with light airs.

After lunch (position 27°00′N 73°31′W, San Salvador 180 miles SSW) I found two small warblers on board. One greenish-brown above and bright yellow below, which could have been one of several species, but I think was a Hooded Warbler *Wilsonia*

citrina as it appeared to have white on the outer tail feathers. The other was a male Cape May Warbler *Dendroica tigrina*, brown above, black cap, red cheeks, bright yellow with black streaks and a white patch on wings. This one had rather dull red-brown cheeks and I was not certain until later when another arrived.

Walking round the deck later I found that the two warblers previously seen were still about and also another rather larger and brighter male Cape May Warbler. A small skulking bird, greenish-brown above and off-white below, gave some trouble, until I finally managed to get a good look at it, when its chestnut cap, white eyebrow and black line through eye identified it as a Swainson's Warbler *Limnothlypsis swainsonii*. Another Pomarine Skua was seen (1700 posn, 26°35′N 74°34′W, Bahama Islands about 130 miles West and SW).

On the morning of 20th in the North West Providence Channel (nearest land 15 miles NE) a nightjar identified as a Chuck-will's-widow *Caprimulgus carolinensis* was on deck and subsequently approached quite closely. It appeared brown at a distance but had mottling of light and dark brown and yellowish-brown when close to, and a yellow throat-band. It usually perched on ledges but when it was in the open it squatted close to the deck with head raised and wings slightly spread. Also on board was an Ovenbird *Seiurus aurocapillus* like a small skulking thrush with an olive-green back. It had an orange patch on the top of the head but this was not obvious except close to.

After lunch (23 miles E of Miami) another walk round the deck produced two more Ovenbirds and a male Cape May Warbler. New arrivals were a pair of American Redstarts *Setophaga ruticilla*. Easy to recognise, the male has black above with orange patches on the wings and big orange squares on the tail, the female olive-green above with similar markings in yellow; a male Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas* olive-green above with a bold black mask and bright yellow throat, very unafraid and constantly flicking its tail; another very small thrush-like bird, Northern Waterthrush *Seiurus noveboracensis*, olive-green above, heavily streaked below and with a conspicuous pale eyestripe; also a possible Catbird *Dumetella carolinensis*.

Later in the afternoon, still in the Florida Strait and 110 miles N of Cuba (24°59′N 79°54′W) several of the above birds were still on board. New ones were a Palm Warbler *Dendroica palmarum*, rather a scruffy specimen, brown above and yellowish below with dark streaks on the chest and a dark chocolate-brown cap and creamy eyebrow; a very small slender bird, possibly a vireo, and a definite Catbird. A handsome bird this, nearly as big as a Blackbird *Turdus merula*, all dark grey except for a black cap and red undertail coverts. There were now three male Yellowthroats. A Pomarine Skua was seen flying N.

By the 21st the ship was into the Gulf of Mexico and heading for the Mississippi (about 85 miles N of Cuba and 70 miles W of

Florida at 0745). Weather continued fine and clear, wind E. During the morning there were on board three male and one female Yellowthroats, a male Cape May Warbler, a Catbird, a female Hooded Warbler, a Northern Waterthrush and four Palm Warblers. The Palm Warblers had chestnut caps which agreed better with the illustration in my book *A Field Guide to the Birds* - Peterson) but even so, they were all of different shades. An immature Peregrine *Falco peregrinus* passed heading north and a Green Heron *Butorides virescens* landed on board, rather a funny chunky looking bird, greenish-black with a long chestnut neck and black cap with a short shaggy crest. It remained on board all day, usually standing in the shade and often with its bill pointing up in the air. Two flocks of six and a pair of Cattle Egrets *Bubulcus ibis* passed heading N to NE. Two landed on board; the amount of buff on these was very variable.

In the afternoon the Cattle Egrets on board increased to three and then four, but no more were seen passing. Many of the same birds were still about and were joined by a thrush, probably a Wood Thrush *Hylocichla mustelina* but I could not be sure. Three single Barn Swallows passed heading north.

During the night of 21-22 April the wind swung northerly and increased, and the weather became overcast and cold. In the morning there were still two Cattle Egrets on board and another arrived later. An American Purple Gallinule was found asleep on deck. Several single Barn Swallows and one flock of about twenty were seen which included at least two Cliff Swallows *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*. An Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* passed heading NW and several others were seen later inside the river entrance.

We arrived at the pilot station about noon and entered the river at 1400. While waiting off the entrance 12 Cattle Egrets, in small groups, passed heading N, and a flock of nine Green Herons landed on board.

We went up the Mississippi to Paulina, about half way between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, where we lay at anchor for five days before going alongside to load a cargo of soya beans. I had some good birdwatching, both in the river and ashore, though that is outside the scope of this narrative. One sighting that surprised me was a male Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator* flying steadily up the river. I had not realized that they came so far south, but on investigation find that they winter in the Gulf of Mexico.

We cleared the river late on 2 May bound for Rotterdam; weather was still quite cold with NE winds. On 3 May a Cattle Egret passed, heading N, about 270 miles NW of Cuba. We passed through the Florida Strait on the 4th, a nasty wet day with a strong NE wind. It cleared up a little pm, and I walked round the deck to find a male Yellowthroat and a female Black-and-white Warbler *Mniotilta varia* — very distinctive and easy to recognise with head and upperparts all black and white stripes and patches.

The last of the small landbirds, an Ovenbird, was seen on the 5th apparently in good condition (110 miles E coast U.S.A., 250 miles NxW Bahamas).

On May 9 an immature Great Blue Heron was on deck when the crew turned to at 0800. (Position 38°20'N 55°40'W, Nova Scotia 460 miles NW and Bermuda 550 miles WSW. Wind WxN/7.) It remained all the way across the Atlantic and became fairly tame, or just too weak to care. I put herrings and water out for it, but after eating the first one it did not feed any more and eventually died on the 15th only about 150 miles from the Scillies. Eventually, I passed it to the Rotterdam Natural History Museum.

On the morning of the 10th a newly dead Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla* was found. This must have arrived during the night. (At midnight 9/10 the nearest land was Cape Race, Newfoundland 430 miles NxW. Anguilla, Lesser Antilles 790 miles SSW.) The wind on 8 and 9 had been between NNW and WSW force 7-9. The corpse was sent to the British Museum at Tring.

Captain P. W. G. Chilman, M.N., 15 Garbett Way, Bishopsgate, York YO2 1SF.

FLOCKS OF GANNETS WITH OTHER SEABIRDS SCAVENGING AT SHRIMP BOATS OFF THE COAST OF FLORIDA

By Bernard King

In the monograph *The Gannet* (1975, Poyser) Bryan Nelson states 'Trawler scavenging for fish or offal, is common, though Gannets tend to stream out to boats operating nearby rather than to follow them for long periods as gulls do'. This, however, seemed not to be the case when I observed Gannets *Sula bassana* following shrimp boats, from various sandy beaches on the Atlantic coast between Cocoa Beach and Ponce Inlet, near Datona, Florida, U.S.A. on 20 December 1983, 2 January, 7 January and 8 January 1984. For instance, about fifty Gannets, adults and juveniles, in company with a thousand other seabirds, trailed two individual shrimp boats a mile or so offshore. As far as I could ascertain the same individuals kept with the boats for six or more miles across the horizon, when all these birds were lost to my view.

The species most frequently observed in company with the Gannets following the shrimp boats were: Brown Pelicans *Pelecanus occidentalis*, Laughing Gulls *Larus atricilla*, Ring-billed Gulls *L. delawarensis*, Herring Gulls *L. argentatus*, Great Black-backed Gulls *L. marinus*, Royal Terns *Sterna maxima*, with Forster's Terns *S. fosteri* and Black Skimmers *Rynchops niger*

much less in evidence. All these excited seabirds caused a considerable hullabaloo as they trailed in the wake of the boats with nets partly exposed above the surface, suspended on upright and horizontal poles. I gathered from Mrs L. Hamilton, (*in litt.*), the manager of the Critter Fleet, Datona Beach, that the crustaceans taken were white and pink shrimps, family *Panaedae*, which are common from the Carolinas, U.S.A., to Brazil. In seeking food the Gannets seldom attained heights of more than approximately twenty feet and then fed by shallow-diving at elevations much less, either by momentarily submerging or by dipping their heads into the water while resting on the surface. There was great competition among all these, and I noticed that the Gannets while on the water partly extended their wings, whether as a means of 'protection' from the clusters of gulls nearby or from necessity in order to regain flight — perhaps both. This behaviour was also exhibited, to a greater or lesser degree, by the other seabirds especially the Brown Pelicans. This feeding technique meant all the birds in turn were left well behind those in flight and so resulted in continuous 'leap-frog' efforts for these to rise up and once more plunge-dive just astern of the shrimp boats. Feeding in this manner continued the whole time they were in view. By stationing myself at the extreme end of the fishing pier, a little north of Cocoa Beach, I was able to observe the seabirds scavenging across a greater distance, and see this highly interesting behaviour.

I have not seen Gannets in British waters following boats in this way, so, to put my observations into perspective I checked the literature. Jeffery Boswell during four days at sea in August 1959, off the coast of Scotland, noted that of 200 seabirds, there were five Gannets only following fishing vessels (*Brit. Birds*, 53: 212-215). Philip S. Watson made spot-counts of scavenging seabirds between 1968-1975 in the Irish Sea and Norway (*Brit. Birds*, 74: 82-90), of 21,500 seabirds they comprised Herring Gulls 65.9%, Kittiwakes *Rissa tridactyla* 26.0%, Great Black-backed Gulls 2.9%, Gannets 2.7% with Fulmars *Fulmarus glacialis* 2.6%. P. G. Oliver (*Brit. Birds*, 76: 31-32) made observations of birds at two fishing vessels either drawing in nets or gutting in the Bay of Biscay on 13 October 1974 and counted 60 Gannets, 20 Great Shearwaters *Puffinus gravis*, 25 Kittiwakes and 90 Great Skuas *Stercorarius skua*; gulls (*Larus spp*) not included.

In conclusion, Oliver asks the question, have Gannets *inter alia* exploited this food source only in more recent years, or has the habit merely gone unrecorded. There is, of course. no firm answer to this but these observations at least provide another example of Gannets persistently making use of man's fishing activities.

Bernard King, Gull Cry, 9 Park Road, Newlyn, Penzance, Cornwall.

NEW AND UNUSUAL SEABIRD RECORDS SUMMARISED FROM RECENT LITERATURE

By S. E. Chapman

This is the first of a planned annual brief summary of new and unusual seabird records worldwide culled from recent literature. It is based principally on the joint British Ornithologists' Union and American Ornithologists' Union survey of Recent Literature, *Ibis* 125 (1-4, Suppl.) and *Ibis* 126 (1 and 2, Suppl.), and journals that R.N.B.W.S. regularly receives in exchange for *Sea Swallow*. Recognising that printed field-guides and handbooks get out of date very quickly and contain only limited information, the main aim is simply to give members, without ready access to libraries, an up-to-date summary of seabird records concerning distribution. Space does not permit detailed interpretations of these data, and this is therefore left for the reader. Those requiring further information of individual items may contact R.N.B.W.S. or their local library or museum. If authors are publishing items which are not included here, but should be, then please let me know.

Amsterdam Albatross *Diomedea amsterdamensis*, nova species. A new species of albatross has been claimed nesting on Amsterdam Island (37°50′S 77°35′E) in the sub-tropical Indian Ocean. It differs from all other known forms. At sea, a diagnostic feature when compared with the similarly sized Wandering Albatross *D. diomedea* is the presence of black feathering on the leading edge of the white underwing near the body. J.-P. Roux *et al*, 1983. *Oiseau* 53: 1-11.

Capped Petrel *Pterodroma hasitata*. A single bird sighted over a period of 4 hours on 26 February 1980, south-west of Rockall. R. Danneberg, 1982. *Orn. Mitt.* 34: 107-17.

Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea*. The first sightings (supported with photographs) in Australasian seas, 47-78 km off the Canterbury Bight, South Island, New Zealand in June 1979. G. A. Tunnicliffe, 1982. *Notornis* 29: 85-91. The most abundant and regularly occurring shearwater in the western Gulf of Mexico in summer and fall with the largest concentrations 70-100 km offshore. 150-200 recorded on 20-22 August 1979 with pelagic fishes and cetaceans. W. Pulich Jr, 1982. *Wilson Bull.* 94: 381-385.

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*. The first record for Arabia: mostly intact remains discovered on the tideline near Azaiba, Batinah, Sultanate of Oman on 23 June 1982. P. R. Colston, and M. D. Gallagher, 1983. *Bull. Brit. Ornithol. Club* 103: 36-37.

Short-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus tenuirostris*. First records of birds collected from Antarctic waters at 64°S 132°E on 20 February 1980 and more next day at 64°S 84°E on 18 February 1981. K. R.

Kerry, R. S. C. Horne, and D. F. Dorward, 1983. *Emu* 83: 35-37. Breeding established on Figure of Eight Island, Archipelago of Recherche, Western Australia in November 1981 extends breeding range 1100 km west. S. G. Larse, 1983. *Emu* 83: 37-38.

Manx Shearwaters *Puffinus puffinus*. The first record (desiccated bird on a beach) for the Gulf coast of Florida, on 16 January 1981. H. P. Langridge, 1983. *Florida Field Nat.* 11: 54. Observations show that the Manx Shearwater is a regular visitor in small numbers to southern African waters during the austral summer with vagrants overwintering in the Benguela current. J. C. Sinclair and B. Rose, 1982. *Cormorant* 10: 81-86.

Little Shearwater *Puffinus assimilis*. South African records indicate this bird is a very scarce visitor to all coasts but with no evidence of occurrence north of 20°S. J. C. Sinclair, R. R. Brooke and R. M. Randall, 1982. *Cormorant* 10: 19-26.

Storm-petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*. A convincing sight record (in a great concentration of whales and cetaceans) at 41°39'S 49°41'W on 13 November 1959. M. H. Thurston, 1982. *Brit. Antarctic Surv. Bull.* 55: 77-103. Multiple records off the coast of Mozambique in February and March 1981. K. Lambert, 1983. *Beitr. Vogelkd.* 29: 12-16.

Pygmy Cormorant *Phalacrocorax pygmaeus*. Possible resident and possible nesting bird near Ravenna marshes, Italy, in 1980 and 1981. A. Ortali, 1981. *Gli Ucelli D'Italia* 1981: 210-212.

South Polar Skua *Catharacta maccormicki*. The first Trinidad sight record on 13 July 1980. T. Manolis, 1981. *Amer. Birds* 35: 982.

Heermann's Gull *Larus hermannii*. Four apparently unsuccessful nesting attempts on Alcatraz Island and Shell Beach, California in 1979-81 are apparently the first nests of this species in the United States. J. Howell *et al*, 1983. *Western Birds* 14: 39-46.

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*. Sight record and photograph of two second year birds from the Canary Islands in March 1982. E. Bos and P. de Heer, 1982. *Dutch Birding* 4: 90-91.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*. Sight record of an adult in Panama from December 1979 to February 1981. N. G. Smith, 1982. *Amer. Birds* 36: 336-337.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*. First record of an immature on 11-18 January 1981 on the River Inn at Innsbruck, Austria. A. Landmann and F. Goller, 1983. *Anz. Ornithol. Ges. Bayern* 22: 121-122.

Sabine's Gull *Xema sabini*. One immature sighted off the coast of Mozambique on 18 February 1981. K. Lambert, 1983. *Bietr. Vogelkd.* 29: 12-16.

Ross's Gull *Rhodostethia rosea*. The first known nesting of this species (three nests with eggs) in mainland North America at Churchill, Manitoba. B. Chartier and F. Cooke, 1980. *Amer. Birds* 34: 839-841.

Sooty Tern *Sterna fuscata*. Sighting from Baltic coast of DDR on 13 August 1979. H. Dathe, 1982. *Beitr. Vogelkd.* 28: 316-317. Breeding on the Mogadishu islets, southern Somalia. J. S. Ash and A. A. Karani, 1981. *Scopus* 5: 22-27.

Royal Tern *Sterna maxima*. The first sight record at Walvis Bay, southern Africa, 29 September 1980. J. D. Sinclair and D. A. Turner, 1981. *Cormorant* 9: 41.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*. A new inhabitant of the inshore archipelago. L. V. Haartman, 1982. *Ornis Fennica* 59: 63-76. First and southernmost specimen record on Atlantic coast of Uruguay. R. Escalante, 1983. *Res. Com. J. Cien. Nat. Montevideo* 3; 20-21.

Black Tern *Chlidonais niger*. First and southernmost specimen record on Atlantic coast of Uruguay. R. Escalante, 1983. *Res. Com. J. Cien. Nat. Montevideo* 3: 20-21.

Forster's Tern *Sterna forsteri*. First sighting in Britain of a bird in first winter plumage in the Falmouth area of Cornwall from 29 January to 18 March 1980. B. Cave, 1982. *Brit. Birds* 75: 55-61.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*. Estimated 425 minimum wintering on the Spanish Mediterranean coast in 1980 and 1981. F. X. Vilagrasa *et al*, 1982. *Alauda* 50: 108-113. A single occurrence near Imperial Beach, San Diego Co., California during May 1980. F. C. Schaffner, 1981. *Western Birds* 12: 181-182.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougalli*. Breeding on the Mogadishu islets, southern Somalia. J. S. Ash and A. A. Karani, 1981. *Scopus* 5: 22-27.

Black Skimmer *Rynchops nigra*. A single bird sighted at Saginaw Bay, Michigan on 22 August 1981 is the first state record. S. H. Mott, 1982. *Jack-Pine Warbler* 60: 29-30. T. S. Baptist records the first state breeding record for Connecticut. *Connecticut Warbler* 2: 47-48.

Black Guillemot *Cepphus grylle*. Presence regularly recorded in French coastal waters: at least 30 in 1975-82, eastern Channel (17), western Channel (7), and on the Atlantic coast south to the Gironde (11). G. Hemery and E. Pasquet, 1983. *Oiseau* 53: 79-82.

Marbled Murrelet *Brachyramplus marmoratus perdix*. S. G. Sealey, H. R. Carter and D. Alison, 1982. *Auk* 99: 778-781. Another N. American record: an adult male in breeding plumage washed ashore in emaciated condition on 9 August 1981. Estimated dead 1½ days. D. R. and J. R. Jehl, Jr, 1981. *Amer. Birds* 35: 911-

912. A specimen from Indiana on 20 November 1981 identified as the Asiatic race. R. E. Mumford, 1982. *Indiana Audubon Quart.* 60: 190-191.

Kittlitz's Murelet *Brachyramptus brevirostris*. Nest with a single egg found on 16 June 1979 in southeast Alaska. J. Fox and J. Hull, 1982. *Murrelet* 63: 27.

Ancient Murrelet *Synthilboramphus antiguum*. Sighting on 17 August 1979 on Columbia River, Washington. F. Doblet and T. Sauve, 1982. *Murrelet* 63: 71-72. Second Alberta record from Calgary. A. N. Wiseley, 1983. *Alberta Nat.* 13: 49-50.

Crested Auklet *Aethia cristatella*. Sighting of an adult at 20°59'N 115°00'W off Baja, California on 7 July 1980. R. Pitman *et al*, 1983. *Western Birds* 14: 47-48.

Acknowledgement

The assistance of Michael G. Wilson in researching the more obscure references is gratefully acknowledged.

SHORT NOTES

SOME NOTES FROM THE SOUTH ATLANTIC

From Captain Colin MacGregor, R.N. comes the following extract from a personal letter.

H.M.S. *Endurance* is indeed unique in the Royal Navy in the opportunities offered to see the abundant bird, seal, whale and other wildlife in the Antarctic and the Falklands. There is at least one R.N.B.W.S. member on board (Surgeon Lt.-Cmdr. Mike Fox). This season we took the General and his wife on a brief wildlife tour to Carcass Island and Steeple Jason, (both these islands feature in Cindy Buxton's and Annie Price's book *Survival South Atlantic*). Carcass Island was astonishing for the variety of birdlife. We noted Magellanic Penguins, numerous species of ducks and geese including Kelp Geese, Upland Geese, Ruddy-necked Geese; Kelp Gulls, Dolphin Gulls, Sheathbills, skuas, Black Oystercatchers; incredibly tame and trusting Tussock Birds, very attractive Black-throated Finches and even tiny House Wrens. All these birds were seen within 2-300 yards of slumbering bull Elephant Seals. Also on Carcass is a colony of Night Herons nesting in the *macracarpa* hedge around the main settlement house.

There is less variety of birdlife on Steeple Jason but it is unique because of its truly vast colony of Black-browed Albatrosses intermixed with Rockhopper Penguins. They have densely colonised a strip 100-200 yards wide stretching for several miles along the coast: literally millions of birds.

Black-browed Albatross *Diomedea melanophris*,
the Falkland Islands, 1983
Photo: C.P.O. Pringle, H.M.S. *Bristol*

From H.M.S. *Bristol* the following are the highlights from C.P.O. Pringle's report from the Falklands and South Georgia.

Off the Falkland Islands seabirds were regularly observed from the Sea Dart Embarkation Deck during watches of one to three hours' duration, from 27 August to 20 November 1983. Records include the following species: Wandering Albatross, Black-browed Albatross and Giant Petrels (both extremely numerous but few of the latter in totally adult plumage), prions (also extremely numerous but not possible to positively identify which species of prion), Wilson's Petrel and Sooty Shearwater (occasional sightings), and King Cormorants (very often seen well offshore).

Legstretcher leave ashore of periods between 1½ to 4 hours provided some astonishing birdwatching moments, particularly at Carcass Island and at New Island as well as San Salvador at the northern end of East Falkland. Species positively identified at Port Stanley included Flightless Steamer Ducks and at New Island Meadowlarks, Turkey Vultures, Red-backed Hawks (a pair), Striated Caracara and Patagonian Crested Ducks. At San Salvador Dotterel, Two-banded Plovers and Black-throated Finches were recorded. At Carcass Island, in addition to the species recorded by Captain MacGregor of H.M.S. *Endurance* (see above), C.P.O. Pringle also mentions seeing a Snipe, Falkland Thrushes, tyrant-birds and pipits.

At South Georgia the main attraction, apart from the scenery, was the vast numbers of Elephant and Leopard Seals as well as sealions. Gentoo and King Penguins were also noted.

Selected extracts from Meteorological Logs and other material received.

AN UNUSUAL HITCHHIKER

On 4 September 1983 M.V. *Gallonda* (Captain R. Knight) was heading westwards through the Straits of Malacca and passing Sumatra (3°56'N 99°48'E) when an unusual "pigeon" came on board. It was bright green with a "luminous" orange beak, ruby red face and white "roundels" round the eye. From the accompanying photograph and this description it is readily identified as a Jamba Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus jamba*. The bird was encouraged to fly away when passing close to land but appeared too tired. As the vessel proceeded into the Indian Ocean, the bird was placed in a box and was given water, barley seed, and fruit. Over the next few days it seemed to perk up.

On 8 September it was released when passing within 7 miles of Sri Lanka, since being of a similar latitude to Sumatra it was thought the habitat would be preferable to the Persian Gulf which was the ship's destination. It was reluctant to leave at first but was last seen heading towards land.

This species is distributed throughout Sumatra, Borneo and S.E. Asia, but is not listed in the Indian sub-continent, and may therefore have caused considerable surprise to birdwatchers in Sri Lanka.

A HITCHHIKER THAT DID NOT MAKE IT

Third Officer D. Bridgers recorded the following in the Met. Log of M.V. *Gandara* (Capt. N. Muhsin) on passage Suez to Taiwan, via Singapore:

On 2 October when passing south of Socotra (11°30'N 55°E) a large heron (later identified as a Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*) was found under the ship's manifold peering at the crew chipping away nearby. It showed no inclination to fly and became weaker each day. It was caught and force-fed with sardines, and water was administered with a plant spray. After a week it was still weak so a vitamin tablet was crushed and dissolved in the drinking water. Next day the bird had perked up considerably and showed more interest in life, so much so in fact that just as it was about to be fed it attacked the Third Officer who retreated with a cut nose and narrowly escaped being stabbed in the eye. From then on the Third Officer refused to have anything further to do with the bird and the job of feeding and watering was left to the Second Officer. It was found that if a slice of sardine (tuna or mackerel) was lined up on the bird's beak it would lift its head up and swallow it quite happily without the need for force-feeding. It ate as much as a whole tin of sardines a day.

The ship bunkered at Singapore LPG anchorage on 11 October, but although encouraged to fly ashore it was disinclined to leave the ship. It subsequently showed no interest in food and on passage to Taiwan it became progressively weaker. It was found a.m. 15th lying on an exposed part of the deck being buffeted by the wind, so it was quickly put out of its misery.

MIGRATION CASUALTIES IN THE GULF OF MEXICO

A graphic description of autumn migration in the Gulf of Mexico is provided by the following extract from the Met. Log of S.S. *British Ranger*:

On the night 10/11 September 1983, eastbound through the Florida Strait N of Cuba, the wind was NNE/12 Kts. At 2100 GMT about 10 small warblers were observed flying in the vicinity of the funnel and radar mast. Numbers increased until midnight when it was estimated there were at least 300. The total remained thus until about 0200, then began to decrease until about 20 at 0400. All had disappeared by daylight. The birds milled around in a tightly packed flock, obviously attracted by the glare of the upper deck lighting which illuminated the funnel and radar mast. Birds were seen to collide with the rotating scanner (a large bulky 12 foot Decca type) and also with the mast itself.

Next morning 130 birds were counted on the lee side of the bridge and accommodation block. Several injured birds were also found, some with broken wings, others merely dazed, exhausted or shocked. These were easily caught. Some recovered and flew away later, but most died. The species could not be identified but most were obviously warblers.

Editor's Comment. A photograph and description of one most closely resembled Townsend's Warbler *Dendroica townsendi*, but this is only one of the many similar species probably involved in this movement. All are notoriously difficult to identify especially at this time of year. It is interesting to compare this account with events described in a similar area by M.V. *Vic Bilh* on 22 September 1982 in *Sea Swallow* 32: 33, and also by SJH in the North Sea (page 26 of this issue).

CASUALTIES IN THE GULF OF ADEN

L/S Mercer writes in the Met. Log of M.V. *Providence Bay* in October 1983. "After leaving Jeddah twenty or more swallows were observed following and flying over the ship. In the Gulf of Aden we started to find dead bodies everywhere. Some others were still alive and continued to follow the ship into the Persian Gulf. When the ship was empty of cargo containers many more bodies were discovered, mostly juvenile swallows."

BIRD BOOKS

The following are available from The Bird Bookshop, Dept. 10, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh EH7 5BT (Tel. 031-556 6042). A copy of their free catalogue is also available.

Harrison (P.) **Seabirds: An Identification Guide** 1983; 448pp; 88 col pl; 31 figs; 312 maps; 23 x 15 cm £15.95

Jennings (M. C.) **Birds of the Arabian Gulf** 1981; 167pp; 12 col pl; 9 drgs; map; 20 x 13 cm £9.95

Serle (W.) & Morel (G. J.) **A Field Guide to the Birds of West Africa** 1977, 1983; 351pp; 40 col & b/w pl; 20 x 13 cm £7.95

Newman (K.) **Newman's Birds of Southern Africa** 1984; 209pp; 2000 col illus; maps; 22 x 14 cm £9.95

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King (B. F.) *et al* **A Field Guide to the Birds of South East Asia** 1975, 1983; 480pp; 64 col & b/w pl; drgs; 20 x 13 £7.95 (S)

Dunning (J. S.) **South American Land Birds: A photographic guide to identification** 1982; 400pp; over 1100 col photos; over 2000 maps; 23 x 15 cm £28.45 (H) £21.95 (SD)

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Svensson (L.) **Identification Guide to European Passerines** 3rd edn. 1984; 310pp; 400 drgs; 18 x 10 cm £12

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Watson (G. E.) **Birds of the Antarctic and Sub-Antarctic** 1975; pp xvii + 350; 11 col pl; text drgs; many maps; 19 x 12 £13.70

USEFUL ADDRESSES

Hon. Member and Advisor R.N.B.W.S. Dr W. R. P. Bourne, M.B.O.U., University of Aberdeen, Dept. of Zoology. Tillydrone Avenue, Aberdeen AB9 2TN.

R.N.B.W.S. Local Representatives

Dartmouth Lt.-Cdr. E. G. Bloomfield, R.N. (Retd.), Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, South Devon TQ6 0HJ.

Devonport Area K. E. Partridge, 165 Stanborough Road, Elburton, Plymouth, Devon PL9 8NY. Tel. Plymouth 45475.

Portsmouth Area Lt.-Cmdr. B. F. Witts, R.N., Oakwood, Duffield Lane, Woodmancote, Emsworth, Hants. Tel. Emsworth 71497 *or* H.M.S. *Excellent*, Ext. 5178.

Portland Mr M. Rogers, Portland Bird Observatory and Field Centre, Old Lower Light, Portland, Dorset. Tel. Portland 820553 (daytime).

Faslane Captain M. G. T. Harris, R.N., H.M.S. *Neptune*, Faslane Helensburgh, Dunbartonshire G84 8HL.

Rosyth Commander M. E. Winter, R.N., H.M.S. *Cochrane*, Rosyth Fife KY11 2AN.

Gibraltar Dr Clive Finlayson, M.B.O.U., 19 Warspite House, Varyl Begg Estate, Gibraltar.

Arabian Gulf Major M. D. Gallagher, M.B.O.U., P.O. Box 668, Muscat. Tel. 602 . 555.

Australia Mr A. R. McGill, 25 Nuwarra Road, Moorebank, 2170 N.S.W.

U.S.A. Dr R. G. Wolk, Ph.D., North Carolina Museum of National History, P.O. Box 27647 Raleigh, North Carolina 27611.

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Interested persons are invited to submit contribution for *Sea Swallow*. Authors do not need to be R.N.B.W.S. members. Material may take the form of papers, notes, progress reports, letters or reviews.

Manuscripts should be typed in double spacing and submitted in duplicate. Figures and diagrams should be prepared in the size of final production.

The style used in *Sea Swallow* should be followed, with the standard abbreviations, nomenclature and use of references as in *British Birds*.

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